

# El Roi - God Who Sees

Where do you run to when you feel mistreated and alone?  
Where can you find comfort? Does anyone see your need?

The Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower --  
The righteous run into it and are safe.  
(Proverbs 18:10-See comment)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EL ROI</b>  <b>אֱלֹהֵי רֹאֵי</b>                      THE RIGHTEOUS MAN OR WOMAN RUNS INTO                      THE STRONG TOWER OF THE GOD WHO SEES                      (Genesis 16:13)</p>			
CONTEXT	CONFLICT	COMFORT	CROSS-REFERENCES
<p><b>Why study God's Names?</b></p> <p><b>Da 11:32b</b> "...the people who know their God will display strength and take action." (Daniel 11:32 Valiant for Truth)</p> <p><b>Review of 2 of His Names</b></p> <p><b>Elohim:</b> He is the Creator and did not create me by accident but to have purpose and meaning in my life - ultimately to give Him glory</p> <p>Isa 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name and whom I have <b>created</b> for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."</p>	<p><b>How does Sarai respond to God's delay in giving a child?</b></p> <p>Ge 16:2 Sarai said to Abram "Now behold the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid (<a href="#">Hagar</a>) perhaps I will obtain children through her" and Abram listened to the voice of Sarai"</p> <p>Sarai misinterpreted God's delay as denial (we all have this tendency when God doesn't answer immediately in our timing) and took matters into her own hands. (Pr 3:5, 6 is a good antidote for divine delays)</p> <p><b>🚩: God's delays are not God's denials</b></p> <p>Biblical waiting is not a passive response to decision making—it is faith in action. It is active trust in God and what He is able to provide.</p> <p><b>Wiersbe...</b></p> <p>Do not miss the practical lessons here: whenever we run ahead of God, there is trouble. The flesh loves to help God, but true faith is shown in patience (Isa. 28:16). We cannot mix faith and flesh, law and grace, promise and self-effort...A willingness to wait on the Lord is another evidence that you are walking by faith.</p> <p>When we depend on ourselves, people see what we can do and our testimony is, "Didn't I do well!" When we depend on God, people see what He can do and our testimony is, "Didn't God do well!" Which testimony will you have today?</p> <p><b>Facing an impossibility gives us the opportunity to trust God.</b></p> <p><b>Oswald Chambers...</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Genesis 16:7</b></p> <p>Ge 16:7 "Now the <b>Angel of the LORD</b> found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to <a href="#">Shur</a> (= Wall!)"</p> <p>The Hebrew word for "<a href="#">found</a>" refers to "finding" someone or something that is lost or misplaced (Lxx = heurisko - ). Certainly Hagar must have felt both "<i>lost</i>" and "<i>misplaced</i>". Alone in a barren desert wilderness, pregnant with a child because of another person's willful desire...but she was not alone and the "Angel" found her. This is where He often finds many of us - alone and in the wilderness. But rest assured He will find you. And He knows all about our past as well as our future</p> <p>Even though He asked Hagar where she had come from and where she was going, the Omniscient, Omnipresent God already knew the answers and yet He still cared to show her personal comfort in her affliction. (Ge 16:8)</p>	<p><b>What does El Roi watch over?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 1:12</p> <p><b>Jehovah</b> assures Jeremiah... "I am watching over My word to perform it."</p> <p>Because El Roi watches over His Word, He is able to perform what He promises. If we truly appropriate this truth, there is nothing that can happen to us that we cannot be at absolute peace about.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Who is described below?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Exodus 3:7</p>

Paul reiterates that **Elohim** created us for a definite purpose

"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Ep 2:7, 8, 9, 10-see note)

**"Workmanship"** is Greek word "poiema" (word study) (English = "poem") - those who are now IN CHRIST (see in Christ & in Christ Jesus) are God's

"masterpieces". You may not feel like a poetic "masterpiece", just like Gideon did not feel like a "valiant warrior" in (Jdg 6:12-note) but God sees us not for who we were in self but for who have become in Christ and He will continue the good work He began in each of us (Php 1:6-note). So take heart and praise Him as Elohim, Who has made you and given you great worth.

**El Elyon:** God Most High is sovereign and in

Beware of discerning according to your own sagacity (quickness of discernment) how God must do some things, because it means that you dictate to God— That word of God must be fulfilled; I cannot allow that I have been deluded, therefore there is only one thing left to do. That is leaning to your own understanding instead of trusting in the Lord with all your heart. (Not Knowing Where)

#### What occurred when **Hagar** conceived?

Hagar...conceived and when she (Hagar) saw that she had conceived, her mistress (Heb - lady, from root = master, lord) (Sarai) was despised in her (Hagar's) sight....May the wrong done me be upon you (Abram)." (Ge 16:4, 5)

**Hagar** despised Sarai - she disdained Sarai, treating her with contempt. (Lxx- atimazo = she deprived Sarai of honor or respect, treating her shamefully, insulting her in thought, word or deed). Family fights are the most painful and the most difficult to settle. Had Hagar maintained a servant's attitude, things may have been different, but her pride and dismissal irritated her mistress (Pr 30:21, 22, 23).

#### What is Sarai's reaction?

(Ge 16:5) She plays the "blame game" - It might be paraphrased something like this...

*"Abe it's all your fault for dragging her out of Egypt. If you hadn't brought her along, this mess would never have happened!"*

Is not Sarai's (and Hagar's for that matter) reaction a picture of the reaction incited and empowered by the old **flesh nature** in us all - the flesh does not like to take personal responsibility for the "mistakes" (aka, sins) brought about by our own foolish choices!

When you follow the wisdom of the world, you will end up warring like the world (James 3:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18).

**George MacDonald** rightly said that

In whatever man does without God, he must fail miserably, or succeed more miserably.

#### How did Sarai respond to being "dissed" by **Hagar**?

"Sarai treated her harshly" (Ge 16:6)

Hebrew word "harshly" means to *afflict* or *oppress* (Lxx- kakoo = to cause harm maltreat)

This same Hebrew verb ("treated...harshly") describes

#### **The Power — of Your Love**

**Shur** means "wall" so in a sense Hagar had her "back against the wall" as we commonly say when we find ourselves in difficult, stress filled circumstances.

**Hagar** ("flight") ran away from Sarai but ran into God. How many of us running away from some oppressive situation, some bad memory, some unfair treatment, etc, have "run into God"?

"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble and He knows those who take refuge in Him." (Nahum 1:7)

**Related Topic: Observe Scriptures on God as our Refuge** (In NASB) - Ps 64:10, Zep 3:12, 2Sa 22:3 22:31 Ps 2:12, 5:11, 7:1, 11:1, 14:6, 16:1, 17:7, 18:2, 18:30, 25:20, 31:19, 34:8,22 36:7, 37:40, 46:1, 57:1, 61:3, 4, 64:10, 62:7, 73:28, 71:7; 91:2,9, 94:22, 118:8, 9, 141:8, 142:5, 143:9, 144:2, Pr 14:32, 30:5, Isa 57:13, Je 16:19, 17:17 Ru 2:12

Do you need to run to God and take refuge in the Strong Tower of His name El Roi right now?

Then run for you won't be disappointed. The adversity you are experiencing may not necessarily be assuaged (even as **Hagar** had to return to the setting of prior harsh treatment) but in your adversity you can take confidence that El Roi sees and He will send comfort **IN** the affliction (cp 1Co 10:13-note) Compare Paul's great encouragement in Ro 8:37...

#### **Romans 8:37**

(7) The LORD said, "I have surely **SEEN** (**ra'ah**) the **affliction** of My people who are in Egypt and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters for I **AM AWARE** (Hebrew means "intimately acquainted with) of their **sufferings**. (**notice Who is speaking in** Ex 3:2)

Is this not a clear description of El Roi the God Who sees all and is therefore fully aware of the suffering of His chosen ones? ( See [Spurgeon's devotional](#))

Note also the interesting parallels: El Roi is derived from "**ra'ah**". And "**affliction**" is same word used to describe Hagar's affliction (Ge 16:11). which El Roi saw. The point is that God sees your suffering saints. Be consoled. Let us keep "fixing our eyes on Jesus, (our El Roi) the Author and Perfecter of faith, " (He 12:2-note) ([Spurgeon's devotional](#))

total control which is why we can place our confidence unhesitatingly in God's ability to cause "all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Ro 8:28-note) ([Spurgeon](#)) (cp Ge 50:20)

### Genesis 12:1-4

Abram is 75yo and God Promised him that "in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (this is the the "GOSPEL" Paul refers below in Gal 3:8)

### Galatians 3:8

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand" (to Abraham) (see Galatians 3)

### Genesis 12:10

"Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there for the famine was severe in the land."

Instead of going

the condition of the children of Israel in slavery under the heavy hand of the Egyptian taskmasters. (Ge 15:13, Ex 1:11, 12) which gives us a good sense of how Hagar (whose name means "flight") felt and why "She fled from her presence." (Ge 16:6)

*Now keep the historical, cultural context in mind:*

**Hagar** was in despair, hopeless, weary, alone, a woman in male dominated culture, pregnant, rejected, cast out after being used, surely feeling no one cares for me, no one understands

**A**: Isn't it often in the cauldron of adverse circumstances like Hagar was experiencing that the "flaming arrows of the evil one" (Ep 6:15, 16-notes) penetrate the defenses of our mind as "the serpent (who) was more crafty than any beast of the field" whispers lies like "God is holding out on you! If He loved you, things would be different! Blame Him!" (cf Ge 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

When those lies come we must chose to "take up the shield of faith" (Ep 6:15, 16-note) remembering that "faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17-note).

It follows then that as we meditate on the meaning of God's Names, like **EI Roi** and remember that EI Roi sees and cares about all of our circumstances (even if they are the result of our sin) the Spirit takes this truth and renews the "defenses" of our mind. Then with our mind renewed by the word of truth which fans the embers of faith, we can now potentially "extinguish all the flaming arrows" (Ep 6:16-note) of doubt and despair. (Look again - How many "arrows" can be extinguished?) This process is a picture of what it means to run into the Strong Tower of His Name and be set "safe" and secure above the swirling storm.

The "Two" Abrams	
Genesis 15	Genesis 16
man of faith	man of unbelief
believed Lord	listened to Sarai
Walks after the Spirit cp Ga 5:16-note; Ga 5:18-note; Ga 5:25-note	Acts fleshly Gal 5:19, 20, 21-note

Ge 16:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ends in total disaster -- Hagar lost her home, Sarai lost her live in maid and Abram lost his second wife and son Ishmael.

IN ALL these things we OVERWHELMINGLY conquer through Him Who loved us. (Ro 8:37-note)

### **A**: Do you see the significance of the little preposition "IN"?

What a "precious and magnificent promise" (2Pe 1:4-note) that sons and daughters of the Living God can experience victory IN the very midst of tribulations, distresses or persecutions because He gives a supernatural provision through Christ, our EI Roi Who sees our need and strengthens us to press on against all odds (cf notes Philippians 4:13).

This scene marks the first OT occurrence of the phrase the "Angel of the LORD".

Although not everyone agrees, the evidence strongly supports that this

Angel is

(1) **God**. Furthermore, the fact that He does not appear again after the incarnation of Christ supports that

(2) **He is the Lord Jesus Christ**. He appears often in the OT at times of great need or distress.

### [Shout to the Lord](#)

Note that He speaks with authority (Ge 16:9), promises He will multiply **Hagar's** descendants (something only God can do) (Ge 16:10), discerns supernaturally she is with child, specifies the child's name is to be **Ishmael** (meaning "God will hear") for God had "given heed (Hebrew = **shama** = hear) to (Hagar's) affliction." (Ge 16:11).

So we serve a God who not only "sees" but "hears." If you are going through a trial,

### How MUCH does EI Roi SEE?

Pr 5:21-note

For the ways of a man are before the EYES of the LORD and He watches ALL his paths.

There is no hiding from EI Roi Who watches over you, seeing and knowing all that happens, and "He is able to come to the aid of those who are (being continuously) tempted (tested or tried)" ([Heb 2:18](#)).

**Scripture related to the "eyes of the Lord"** = Pr 15:3; 2Chr 16:9; Job 31:4; 34:21; Ps 11:4; 17:3; 139:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Je 16:17; 17:10; 23:24; 32:19; Ho 7:2; Rev 2:18,23

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Heb 4:13-note

**GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE**  
-  
**COMFORTING & CONVICTING**

As believers we should love the

"down" to Egypt  
Abe should  
have gone  
"down" on his  
knees and "up"  
to God

### [Genesis 13](#)

Separation of  
Abram (stayed  
in Canaan) and  
Lot (moved to  
Sodom) (Ge  
13:7, 8, 9, 10,  
11, 12)

### [Genesis 14](#)

Abram rescues  
[Lot](#), meets  
[Melchizedek](#)  
who blesses  
"God Most High  
([El Elyon](#))  
[Possessor](#) of  
heaven and  
earth. (Ge  
14:11, 12, 13,  
14, 15, 17, 18,  
19, 20, 21, 22)

### [Genesis 15:6](#)

"Then he  
**believed**  
(**aman**) in the  
LORD; and He  
**reckoned**  
(**hasab**) (**Lxx =**  
**logizomai**) it to  
him as  
[righteousness](#)  
(**Lxx =**  
**dikaiosune**)."  
(Ro 4:3-note, Ro  
4:4, 5, 6,9,20,  
22, 23, 24, 25  
Gal 3:6, 7, 8, 9,  
10, 11, 12, 13,  
14 He 11:8-note  
Jas 2:23-note)  
(see Covenant:  
Abrahamic vs  
Old vs New)

**A:** Maybe like Hagar you're also running from a difficult situation in which you were unjustly treated and maybe like Hagar you were part of the problem. Take comfort in the truth that El Roi sees your distress. He has heard how you've have been spoken to.

**A:** So first remember the truth about El Roi, as shown in (Ps 34:18) (See "advantages of a broken heart [Spurgeon](#))

#### Psalm 34:18

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and [saves](#) those who are [crushed](#) in spirit. (Ps 34:18)

"Crushed" = "Contrite" and also in (Isa 57:15)

And then after you remember the truth about God, make a choice to act upon that truth for example according to Ps 55:22: (see [Spurgeon](#))

You may say wonder -- "Where was He when something bad happened to me? Why did He not stop it?" At times like this make the choice to remember that He is still El Elyon and He is in control. He is causing it all things to work together for good. Has someone you loved or cared for walked away from you and now shuns you and you are "**brokenhearted**"?

**As you study the columns to the right, you will learn that you** have a God Who sees you and Who cares for you. He sees those who are hurting you and they will not go free. He is ever "[near](#) to the **brokenhearted**"

**What do we do when find ourselves in "Hagar" like circumstances?  
Remember His promises like...**

Psalm 145:18, 19, 20

18 The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. 20 The LORD keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy. ([Spurgeon #1](#), [#2](#), [#3](#)) (See related story on "worry, anxiety" in Sermon on Mount comments Mt 6:25, 26-notes)

#### Psalm 55:22

[Cast](#) your [burden](#) upon the LORD and He will [sustain](#) you; He will never allow the righteous to be [shaken](#).

**Spurgeon** writes...

Care, even though exercised upon legitimate objects, if carried to excess, has in it the nature of sin. The precept to avoid anxious care is earnestly inculcated by our Saviour, again and again; it is reiterated by the apostles; and it is one which cannot be neglected without involving transgression: for the very essence of

feeling lonely and distressed thinking no one cares, no one knows, you can beyond a shadow of a doubt, know that God **sees** and that God **hears** (cp name [Ishmael](#)) when you cry out to Him. **Are you crying out?** Remember you may not be able to see Him, but as you **meditate** on Hagar's seemingly hopeless state, His indwelling Spirit will enable you to "see" Him with eyes of faith (2Cor 5:7, 4:18). **God hears** our words and **sees** our hearts. You can be assured He is a personal God Who attentively watches over **all** His children **all** the time. In Hagar's case, it is a reminder that even though she was out of Abraham's sight, God had never taken his eyes off her. He can be trusted—even in the desert. No heartache or trouble touches you that He does not see. (Read Ps 33:18-19) Jesus is our El Roi Who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

His eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know He watches me.

**Surely Hagar would join us  
in singing (sing it out  
beloved)...**

[With All I Am](#)

Into Your Hand I commit again  
With all I am for You O Lord  
You hold my world in the palm  
of Your Hand

And I am Yours forever!

Jesus I believe in You  
Jesus I belong to You  
The reason that I live  
The reason that I sing  
With all I am.

**What does the  
"Angel"  
teach us about God?**

comforting  
attribute of God's  
omnipresence, for  
a s **Isaac Watts**  
said so  
poetically...

Within thy circling  
power I stand;  
On every side I  
find Thy hand;  
Awake, asleep, at  
home, abroad,  
I am surrounded  
still with God.


[Spurgeon](#)  
writes...

Our place of  
safety is the  
bosom of the  
Saviour.  
Perhaps we are  
tempted just  
now, in order to  
drive us nearer  
to Him. Blessed  
be any wind  
that blows us  
into the port of  
our Saviour's  
love! Happy  
wounds, which  
make us seek  
the beloved  
Physician. Ye  
tempted ones,  
come to your  
tempted  
Saviour, for He  
can be touched  
with a feeling of  
your infirmities,  
and will succor  
every tried and  
tempted one.

**How much does  
El Roi CARE?**

[Matthew 10:29-](#)  
**31**


**Comments  
on  
El Roi**

: When life becomes too painful to bear, we can find strength in remembering what [Hagar](#) discovered. The Lord is "the God who sees me." When we understand that the Lord is aware of our pain and need, our strength will be renewed. God not only sees us, He sees the future. He promised [Hagar](#) a future for her unborn son Ishmael. We too have hope for tomorrow, whatever our pain is today.

**El Roi** = "a God of seeing" (Ge 16:13ESV), "the God Who sees me" (Ge 16:13NIV); "You Are the God Who Watches Over Me" (Ge 16:13GWT) (Also see the picturesque meaning of the **Lxx** translation of the Hebrew "**Roi**" at bottom of third column = "Comfort"); "You are the God of Vision" (NAB)

God sees all as

anxious care is the imagining that we are wiser than God, and the thrusting ourselves into his place to do for him that which he has undertaken to do for us. We attempt to think of that which we fancy he will forget; we labour to take upon ourselves our weary burden, as if he were unable or unwilling to take it for us. Now this disobedience to his plain precept, this unbelief in his Word, this presumption in intruding upon his province, is all sinful. Yet more than this, anxious care often leads to acts of sin. He who cannot calmly leave his affairs in God's hand, but will carry his own burden, is very likely to be tempted to use wrong means to help himself. This sin leads to a forsaking of God as our counselor, and resorting instead to human wisdom. This is going to the "broken cistern" instead of to the "fountain;" a sin which was laid against Israel of old. Anxiety makes us doubt God's lovingkindness, and thus our love to him grows cold; we feel mistrust, and thus grieve the Spirit of God, so that our prayers become hindered, our consistent example marred, and our life one of self-seeking. Thus want of confidence in God leads us to wander far from him; but if through simple faith in his promise, we cast each burden as it comes upon him, and are "careful for nothing" because he undertakes to care for us, it will keep us close to him, and strengthen us against much temptation. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

: He hears when we are in distress and have been mistreated or despised. [Hagar](#) would likely never forget how God had heard her cry of affliction.

**He never let her go...**

Play Matt Redman's youtube video (**notice the woman sitting in the desert** at the beginning of the video and imagine for a moment how Hagar must have felt at that moment)...

[You Never Let Go](#)

**What grief are you experiencing?**

Recall God's comforting words to [Hagar](#) and remember that...


Grief has an eloquent voice when **Mercy** is the listener and Woe has a plea which **Goodness** cannot resist. (click above for more on His attributes mercy and goodness).

[\(Play "Surely, Goodness & Mercy"\)](#)

**Genesis 16:13**

Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "**You are (El Roi) a God who sees**"; for she [said](#), "Have I even remained alive here after [seeing](#) Him?"

Who had she just seen in context? The **Angel of the LORD** and she calls Him "God" and specifically "El Roi". The context would support the premise that **El Roi** represents a preincarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

: Be encouraged by this "revelation" of God to [Hagar](#) and remember that in your most painful trial you too may have your most intimate and personal encounter with God.

**29** Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? and yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

**30** But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

**31** So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows


Click on the [link \(entire Psalm\)](#) but at least read Ps 139:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 which gives a beautiful description of **El Roi** Who sees ALL and is intimately acquainted with ALL our ways.

[Psalms 139](#)


David prays: (23) [Search](#) me, O God and know my heart; Try me and know my [anxious thoughts](#). (24) and [SEE if](#) there be any [hurtful](#) way in me and lead me in the everlasting way.

The Hebrew for "[see](#)" ([ra'ah](#)) is the word from which "roi" (El Roi) is derived. So David prays for El Roi Who sees ALL to see within his heart so that David might walk in the ALL the ways of

El Roi and so is never caught by surprise. When He cannot rule, He overrules; and He always accomplishes His purposes. (Study His attribute of "**Sovereignty**")

 Satan wants us to think that our "disobedience detours" must become the permanent road for the rest of our lives; but this is a lie. Like Abraham and Sarah, we can confess our sins, accept God's cleansing (1Jn 1:9), and then learn to live with our mistakes. Yes, there will be pain and regret; but God's grace will overcome in the end.

**George Morrison** : "The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings."

 This symbol marks a comment related to application of the truth

**God always sees...**

In Ex 3:7-8 **Jehovah** said "I have **surely seen** the affliction of My

Hagar's wilderness experience brought her face-to-face with God and taught her that "I AM" is the living God who SEES our plight and HEARS our cry when we hurt. He is a personal God, concerned about abused people and unborn babies. He knows our past and our future and cares for those who will trust Him, and so we can confidently proclaim with the psalmist Ps 84:10, 11, 12...

### **Better is One Day**

Notice also that God's wonderful attributes of **omniscience** and **omnipresence** are "inherent" in the Name "El Roi" God Who Sees

What did **Hagar** name the well in Genesis 16:14?

"the well was called **Beer-lahai-roi**; **behold**, it is between Kadesh and Bered."

**Beer-Lahai-Roi** "well of Living One Who sees me" i.e. of the ever living omnipresent Providence. We see a woman who begins with wandering and ends in worship... I think Hagar would have liked Matt Redman's youtube video...

### **The Heart of Worship**

Sweet thought! We have a Friend above,  
Our weary, faltering steps to guide,  
He follows with His eye of love  
The precious ones for whom He died.  
—Anon.

### **You Are My All in All**

Hagar's specific description seems to suggest that she was now not a pagan worshiper of idols, but had "turned to God from idols to serve (the) living and true God" (1Th 1:9-note) of

righteousness. May we ALL be so bold as to give El Roi the freedom to search our innermost thoughts and ways so that we might truly "become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2Pe 1:4-note)

**He sees...**

**He knows all about your past**

**He knows if you were abused**

**He knows the pain you've felt**

As you read Psalm 121 below notice how it gives a clear, comforting picture of **El Roi**, the God Who never slumbers or sleeps and therefore Who always sees all of your needs and Who is always able to come to your aid and always guards your going out and your coming from this time forth and forever. This promise first given to Israel is also for all of His sons and daughters. Hallelujah!

**Psalm 121**

people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry (He also hears!), because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite."

**Jesus our Jehovah, our El Roi** saw His men in Mark 6:48-50...

"**Seeing** them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He \*came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were terrified. But

Abraham. Admittedly, this is somewhat speculative and we will have to wait until we are all in His presence to see if Hagar became an OT believer.

### [Draw Me Close to You](#)

You might consider taking a moment and meditating on the truths you have just read to allow your Teacher the Spirit (Jn 14:26, 16:13, 1Jn 2:27, 20) to renew your mind. Or you might consider sitting quietly and praising El Roi as you listen to some of Chris Tomlin's youtube songs that speak of our great God's majesty and glory...

### [indescribable](#) [HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD](#) [Holy Is The Lord God Almighty](#)

**Jay Adams...**

El-Roi = "God that seeth"—cf. Ge 16:13. The encouraging story that accompanies this name is calculated to bring hope to modern day Hagers, wandering alone. This single parent needed to know—as many today do—that in the lonely places, where danger and uncertainty lurk on every side, God's children are not really alone. God overlooks none; He sees them all. (A Theology of Christian Counseling: More than Redemption)...

**Indeed Hagar's personal encounter discovered the great truth that our God is forever...**

### [Mighty to Save](#)

(See studies on "Mighty to Save")

(See in depth discussion of **Psalm 121 Commentary**)

1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains. From where shall my help come?

2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to slip. He who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is your keeper. The LORD is your shade on your right hand.

6 The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul.

8 The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever.

**YouTube Videos**  
[I Lift My Eyes Up](#)  
[I Lift My Eyes - Bebo Norman](#)  
[I Lift My Eyes Up - Ps 121](#)  
[Open the Eyes of my Heart](#)  
[Come, Now is the Time to](#)

immediately He spoke with them and \*said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."

So whether you are under a hard taskmaster or straining with great effort against seemingly overwhelming waves of affliction, discouragement, etc, you can rest fully assured that Jesus, El Roi, sees where you are and He is not aloof but concerned and able to deliver in His perfect timing and perfect purposes (Ro 8:28-note, Gen 50:20). If you find yourself in circumstances like the Israelites or the disciples, stop and praise Him for Who He is forever, El Roi (cf Heb 13:8-note), thanking Him that HE SEES (cf 1Th 5:18-note)! Amen

**Spurgeon** - When no eye seeth you except the eye of God, when darkness covers you, when you are shut up from the observation

**When we're found in the desert place like Hagar let us be filled with His Spirit and sing out** (like Job 1:21, cp Ps 34:1)...

**Blessed Be Your Name**

### **El Roi (Our Daily Bread)**

Many locator devices are on the market today that promise to help us keep track of elderly parents, children, wallets, pets, parolees, even potential kidnapping victims.

As useful as these gadgets are, they would have done Hagar no good. No one seemed to care enough about Hagar and her unborn child to monitor their well-being in the desert. No one but El Roi—Hebrew for "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees" (Ge 16:13).

Hagar served Sarai, Abram's wife. Sarai felt like a weak link in the chain of God's promise to bless Abram with many descendants. She was barren, so she told Abram to sleep with her maidservant and build a family through her. This ill-advised suggestion—born amid intense cultural pressures to provide an heir—led to nothing but trouble. When Hagar became pregnant, she despised Sarai for her inability to have children. Then Sarai treated Hagar so badly that she ran away. There in the desert, feeling the misery of her past and the uncertainty of her future, Hagar met God, who saw

**Worship**  
**Blessed Be Your Name**  
**Blessed Be Your Name**

He sees where you have come from and where you are going. He sees what you need as well as what you don't need. He sees what He wants to make of you and how He's going to achieve it (cf His calling fearless Gideon "valiant warrior").

**He is ever there to comfort those who weep**

**Because He never slumbers nor does He sleep**

At the end your rope?

In El Roi you have hope!

Take a moment and listen/sing the following encouraging words based on Psalm 121...let the Spirit renew your mind and encourage your heart if you are downcast...

**He Is Over Me**

I will lift my eyes  
To the hills and  
their Creator  
Who made all  
heaven and earth  
For He watches  
me  
Will not sleep, no



of mortals, even then be ye like Jesus Christ. Remember His ardent piety, His secret devotion—how, after laboriously preaching the whole day, He stole away in the midnight shades to cry for help from His God. Recollect how His entire life was constantly sustained by fresh inspirations of the Holy Spirit, derived by prayer. Take care of your secret life; let it be such that you will not be ashamed to read it at the last great day.

**A W Tozer** - The doctrine of God's omnipresence, is a great central truth of Scripture. God is present, near me, next to me — and this God sees me and knows me through and through! At this point faith begins, and while it may go on to include a thousand other wonderful truths, these all refer back to the truth that **God is, and God is here!** ( See **Jehovah**

her and took care of her.

El Roi sees your past misery, your present pain, your uncertain future. He is so watchful that He knows when the smallest sparrow perishes (Mt. 10:29, 30, 31). And He is the God who sees and cares for you today. — Marvin Williams

If God sees the sparrow's fall,  
Paints the lilies short and tall,  
Gives the skies their azure hue,  
Will He not then care for you?  
—Anon.

**Keep your eyes on the Lord;**

**He never takes His eyes off you.**

**And because this is eternally true of the Name of the Lord, El Roi...**

**[Let Everything that has Breath Praise Him](#)**

**Note on Hebrew Word "Roi"**

The Greek of the Hebrew (Septuagint) translates **El Roi** (specifically the verb **Roi** as "sees") with the Greek verb **ephorao** which is very picturesque for it means "to gaze upon, to fix one's gaze on, and thus to regard, to show concern for in this case speaking of God's concern for Hagar in dire straits. **Ephorao** is used in Acts 4:29 in a prayer asking God to "take note" of their threats, to look with favor on the supplicant (the one praying). **Ephorao** (epeidon) is used by another woman in distress - childless Elizabeth - and when she became pregnant

never slumbers  
He's ever over me

As I come and I go  
I am safe, for I know  
That His care is sufficient for me

Winter warmth and light  
And a shady place in summer  
He's ever over me

Run into the truth of the God Who sees you ALL of your days (cp Pr 30:5)

He sees where you've come from.

He sees where you are right now.

He sees where you are going.

He sees what you need as well as what you don't need.

He knows what He desires to make you into and has the power to bring it to pass.

**[I Lift My Eyes Up](#)**

Chorus:  
Oh how I need You Lord  
You are my only hope  
You're my only prayer  
So I will wait for You  
To come and rescue me  
Come and give me life

El Roi sees **past present and**

**Shammah -  
The LORD is  
There)**

2Chr 16:9 "For  
(term of  
explanation -  
see 2Chr 16:9)  
**the eyes of  
Jehovah move**  
to and fro  
throughout the  
earth that He  
may strongly  
support those  
whose heart is  
completely His.  
You have acted  
foolishly in this.  
Indeed, from  
now on you will  
surely have  
wars."

she exalted in the LORD  
saying "This is the way the  
Lord has dealt with me in  
the days when He **LOOKED  
WITH FAVOR UPON** me, to  
take away my disgrace  
among men." (Lk 1:25, cp  
epiblepo [*He has had regard  
for*] of Mary in Lk 1:48; cp  
Ge 16:13ESV translation =  
"Truly here I have seen **Him  
Who looks after me**"). In  
short, El Roi conveys first of  
all a sense of His presence,  
but clearly (as with  
Elizabeth) includes an  
assurance of His perfect  
provision.

**future.** He sees  
t h e **outcast** on  
her knees. He will  
assure that it all  
works together for  
good because His  
lovingkindness is  
from everlasting  
to everlasting

He holds your  
future in His  
hands...it may not  
look like it now  
but you have not  
seen the end yet  
for you are a work  
in progress being  
conformed to the  
image **of the Son  
of God**

Whether you're  
pregnant,  
homeless,  
hopeless, at the  
end of your rope  
and in the "barren  
[wilderness](#) " it  
may seem that  
God does not see  
you, but HE  
DOES for He is  
the God who sees  
the hand maid  
Hagar as well as  
the patriarch  
father Abraham..

T h e [wilderness](#)  
([Wilderness](#)) is  
not a bad place to  
be if in that place  
you hear God,  
and there begin to  
understand His  
tender mercies  
and covenant love  
for you His  
beloved in Christ.

Do you think that  
there's no one  
who knows what  
you're going thru?  
No one who  
cares? Wrong. **El-  
Roi, the mighty**

**One who sees,** knows **everything** about you. Even if you've brought some of this trouble upon yourself thru your foolish decisions, He still cares! He knows your name, where you've come from and where you are going and He wants to bless you with the assurance that He is in control of the beginning and the end because He is the God Who sees. He watches over you, seeing and knowing all that happens, and He comes to your aid.

Consider this prayer - El Roi, You see everything. Help those who've run away -- in any sense of the word -- to return where they belong. In Jesus' name, Amen

For additional study on the

**Protection of  
God**

Click [Torrey's Topic](#) below and pop up the Scriptures in the NASB

**EL ROI  
GOD WHO SEES  
ADDITIONAL NOTES**

When *El-Roi* sees His people, it's out of a sense of caring.

"If God is for us, who is against us?" (Ro 8:31-note)

Our enemy, Satan, is out to destroy us, but God is for us. And "if God is for us, who can be against us?" Knowing that God sees all things may leave you in moment-to-moment fear that He will going to strike you down for your sinful ways! How can any of us stand under the careful scrutiny of a holy God? But the revelation of God as *Ei-Roi*, the Mighty One who Sees, is intended to be a great comfort to those who love Him, not to strike terror in our hearts.

**Herbert Lockyer** - In the wilderness Hagar discovered her **Jehovah Shammah - The LORD is There** and proved Him to be her **Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide** and when her child was born he was called, [Ishmael](#), meaning "God who hears." (All the Divine Names and Titles of the Bible)

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**Adrian Rogers** - Our God is:

The God of strength - Elohim.

The God of sovereignty - Jehovah.

The God of superiority - Adonai.

The God of sufficiency - El Shaddai.

The God of supremacy - El Elyon.

The God of stability - El Olam.

The God of sympathy - El Roi.

And all of these names are made known unto us in that one beautiful name - JESUS.

**EI Roi** - He is the God of sympathy. He sees. He knows. God sees you. You don't have any heartache, you don't have any pain, you don't have any trouble that He doesn't know of. In Psalm 33:18, 19, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, and upon them that hope in His mercy." Did you know that God sees you right now? God knows your very thoughts. God knows your heartache. God knows your imaginations right now. God is there and Jesus is our EI Roi, because what does the Bible teach us in the Book of Hebrews? We do not have a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows. He cares. His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.

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**Ava Pennington** quips that "Science has provided us with the remarkable ability to pinpoint and see a particular location on earth from heaven. Yet God has always done this—and without satellites!"

Pennington then asks "How many times have we been stuck in a difficult situation, wondering if anyone knows or sees us? No matter how alone we may feel, EI Roi's watchful eye is always on us.

El Roi, help me remember that no matter where I am, I am never out of Your sight.

How does knowing that God always sees me bring me comfort today? ([Daily Reflections on the Names of God](#))

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**Darlene Zschech** - The name EI Roi tells us that God sees everything. He never rests or sleeps. He is everywhere

No matter how lost you feel, no matter how cut off and alone you feel, EI Roi, the God Who Sees, knows exactly where you are. You are not lost and alone. You aren't abandoned in whatever wilderness you are passing through at this moment.

Thank you, Father, that when I felt utterly lost and alone, you saw just where I was. You knew where I had been and you had wonderful plans for my future. Thank you, God Who Sees all. ([Revealing Jesus: A 365 Day Devotional](#))

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**Thelma Wells** has a devotional entitled **Call God!** and notes that one of the names we should learn to call on is EI Roi -

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:5–6)

Some days this world seems to be just a big fat mess. On the news we see footage of war and destruction. People all over the

country are being abused and misused, many right in their own homes. Children are acting crazy. Husbands and wives are abandoning each other and their kids. Churches are in upheaval, just going through the motions of worshiping God. Merciless killings and rampant crime plague our communities. People are losing their jobs and the economy looks like it's going rapidly down the tubes. It seems like more people are physically sick today than ever before. In America, the richest country in the world, there are folks going to bed hungry and homeless. Schoolchildren have to pass through metal detectors to go to their classroom, lunchroom, or library. Drug and alcohol abuse is at an all-time high. Sexual perversion, promiscuity, and pornography are destroying lives and relationships.

I'll tell you, some days I wonder if we're in a submarine at the bottom of the sea, with no hope of seeing the sun on the water again. What can we do when we feel like that? I've found a way to the surface. Repeat after me, and we can both be saved from our despairing moments: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

When all I can see is trouble everywhere I turn, I review the names of God to remind me of his goodness and how worthy he is to be praised. Then I give him a call!

When you need God's power to help, call Elohim—God.

When you need the divine presence of God, call Yahweh—the Lord.

When you need the sacredness of God, call El Elyon—the Most High God.

When you need an overseer of your affairs, call El Roi—the God who sees.

When you need an all-powerful deity, call El Shaddai—God Almighty.

When you need a provider, call Yahweh Yireh—the Lord will provide.

When you need a helper, call Yahweh Nissi—the Lord is my banner.

When you need peace of mind, call Yahweh Shalom—the Lord of peace.

When you need a perfect Savior, call Qedosh Yisrael—God is morally perfect.

When you need a protector, call Yahweh Sabaoth—God is our Savior and protector.

When you need a God who will not die, call El Olam—the everlasting God.

When you need a God of righteousness, call Yahweh Tsidkenu—God is our standard for right behavior and righteous living.

When you need a divine presence, call Yahweh Shammah—the Lord is there.

When you need a God of ultimate authority, call Attiq Yomin—the Ancient of Days, who will one day judge the nations.

Right this minute I can feel refreshing air being pumped into my spirit, lifting it from the bottom of the sea to the surface where the light of God is beaming down on the cabin of my soul. My soul sings "Holy, Holy, Holy" to the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of your glory! Blessing and honor, dominion and power be unto you, Most High God. You are here for us in every area of our lives. Praise you because you are worthy of our praise!

My soul is no longer cast down. I am no longer disturbed. God has hoisted my soul from the depths to the light, by the power of his name. My spirit is irrepressible because he has filled it with hope. Hallelujah!

Oh, Divine Master, it's so good to consider your name. Our only true hope lies in your character. Any time we feel like we cannot rise above the ocean floor, may your name fill our minds and lift our hearts in praise. We appreciate the wonder-working power of your name, God Most High. Amen. ([Irrepressible Hope Devotional](#))

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### **Barbara Johnson - The God Who Sees**

She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me." GENESIS 16:13

Hagar, the pregnant maidservant of Sarah, had fled into the wilderness. She just wanted to die. But God sent an angel who found her and told her to go back home even though it was the hardest place to go. He then predicted that the child born to her would be a wild man who wouldn't get along with anybody.

Now I don't know about you, but if I were Hagar, that's not exactly what I would have wanted to hear. Hagar's response, however, was to call God a name that had never been used before: The-God-Who-Sees. And she accepted what he said.

Yes, our God is the all-knowing One who sees our scars, our secrets, and our strength. Our wounds and shame are his affair, and he knows just how much trouble we can stand. Somehow, the fact that he knows us so well makes a difference. We understand there is a direction and we are part of a bigger picture. From the wildernesses in our lives, the fact that he sees gives us a reason to carry on. No longer are we anonymous, lonely, and lost.

I wonder what kind of reception Hagar got when she returned to the campsite of Sarah and Abraham? The Bible doesn't tell us. But five chapters and fourteen years later, the Lord visited Sarah. Her life, also, had been burdened and full of trouble. The root of her problem was not fertility, like Hagar's, but infertility.

Once, years before, Sarah had laughed sarcastically at messengers who predicted she would have a baby. It seemed a ridiculous

thing since she was long past child-bearing age. When confronted with the fact that she'd laughed behind closed doors, Sarah denied it (Gen. 18:10-15). But that didn't change the facts. God knew. He is The-God-Who-Sees our secrets. In spite of what we try to hide from him, he leads us toward our destiny.

At a ripe old age, Sarah bore a boy named Isaac and laughed again. But this time the sarcasm was gone. This time, it was just fun, hilarity, and real toe-tingling joy. She said right out loud: "God has made me laugh." But the part I like best is when Sarah added, "and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me" (Gen. 21:6). I think God has given women the power to move on in life through the contagion of laughter.

I've spent the past several years collecting quips about laughter and sayings that make me laugh. I have a lot of quotes about dieting, middle age, motherhood, husbands, wrinkles, love—you name it: all those hot spots in a woman's life that would kill us if we let them get us down. The secret is to not let them, get you down. The secret of not letting them get you down is to laugh about them. In fact, I try to find ways to make the saddest things funny.

We can sigh about things, or we can laugh. Both these responses release pressure, but which is the most fun? We laugh so we won't scream. Laughter is a riotous vote of acceptance that he is The-God-Who-Sees. Whatever it is probably won't go away, so we might as well live and laugh through it. When we double over laughing, we're bending so we won't break. If you think your particular troubles are too heavy and too traumatic to laugh about, remember that laughing is like changing a baby's diaper. It doesn't solve any problems permanently, but it makes things more acceptable for a while.

You have a choice. Laugh in sarcasm or laugh with joy. Try it both ways, then write and tell me what worked for you!

Dear Jesus, teach me to laugh, but don't let me forget I cried. Amen. ([The Best Devotions of Barbara Johnson](#))

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### **James Smith - My Father sees me!**

"The One who sees me!" Genesis 16:13

The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, and His ear is open unto their cry.

God sees everything—but He observes His people with special attention.

His eye has been upon me this day! He has seen every movement of my mind, and every action of my body. His eye is upon me now, and will be through the dark watches of the night.

But it is a comfortable thought, that He who sees me always—loves me most! He loves me, notwithstanding all that He sees amiss in me.

Let us ever cherish the thought: "My Father sees me! I am under His eye! He sees all I do, all I suffer, all my desires. Nothing can conceal the least circumstance from His eye. He sees me—when I see not Him. He sees me in the furnace—and is with me. He sees me in the battle—and gives me the shield of His salvation. He sees me when my foot is slipping—and often has the hand of His mercy caught me and held me up! He see me when tempted to sin—when giving way to fear—or when yielding to the world!"

Let me call to mind this solemn fact: My God sees me!

If I sin—it must be immediately under His eye!

If I yield to temptation—it must be in His presence!

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### **David Guzik - (Ge 16:13-16) God's blessing and protection of Hagar and Ishmael.**

Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered. So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees: Hagar knew this was no mere angel who appeared to her. The Angel of the Lord was also the-God-Who-Sees, the same One watching over Hagar and Ishmael. Ishmael is the first man in the Bible to receive his name before he was born.

So Hagar bore Abram a son: Apparently, Hagar did return with a submitted heart. She told the whole story to Abram and Sarai, and Abram named the child Ishmael, just as instructed in the meeting with the Angel of the Lord Hagar described. Hagar might have returned and said, "I fled from you all because I was so miserable and thought I could not continue here. But the Lord met me and told me He would see me through. He told me to come back and submit to you, so that is why I'm here." After meeting with El Roi,

(You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees), Hagar knew that if God could be with her in the wilderness, He would be with her in having to submit to Sarai also.. "If we seek to change our circumstances, we will jump from the frying pan into the fire. We must be triumphant exactly where we are. It is not a change of climate we need, but a change of heart. The flesh wants to run away, but God wants to demonstrate His power exactly where we have known our greatest chagrin." (Barnhouse)

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**W H Griffith-Thomas - The Special Interposition** (Ge 16:7-12).—What a picture of real life is found in this chapter! Man is seen blundering, sinning, and suffering, and then God intervenes with His overruling providence, wisdom, and grace.

We see the blessed truth of Divine interest in human troubles (Ge 16:7). 'The angel found her.' God had not overlooked what had taken place, and now He interposes in order to bring about the best possible results after the error and sin of His children. How often God has had to do this for His children since that day!

We observe, too, the Divine call for perfect submission (Ge 16:8, 9). The questions 'whence' and 'whither' recall Hagar to her position, and the slave woman tells the simple truth about her flight. The Divine command is that she should return and submit herself. It will be noticed that the quasi-marriage is not for an instant acknowledged. Sarah is still Hagar's mistress. This call for submission was the first step towards blessing in Hagar's life. The same is true to-day. If we have made mistakes which have led us into sin, the primary condition of restoration is complete submission to the will of God, whatever that may involve.

We have also the Divine assurance of definite blessing (Ge 16:10). God accompanies His call for submission by the promise of blessing to her child. He never makes a demand without giving us a promise. Thus He encouraged and incited her to the very submission from which she doubtless shrank.

And above all there is the Divine revelation of overruling providence (Ge 16:11, 12). God told her that she should have a son and also of his name and its meaning (Ishmael; 'God shall hear'). Thus every time she mentioned his name she might be reminded of God's promises. Her son's character and relation to others were also revealed (Ge 16:12), an additional encouragement to the poor creature in her misery and trouble.

This interposition had its immediate and blessed effect on Hagar. It led to a realization of the Divine presence (Ge 16:13.) 'She called the name.... Thou God seest me,' or 'The God of my vision.' The Divine Presence thus came into her life with its blessing and cheer.

**It prompted a memorial of the Divine promise** (Ge 16:14). 'The well was called [Beer Lahai Roi](#).' See margin, 'The well of Him that liveth and seeth me'; that is, the well where life is preserved after seeing God.

It elicited obedience to the Divine will. She returned to her mistress, accepted the position, and all things were fulfilled according to the Divine revelation.

**1. The continuance of the old nature.**—How truly this fact of the spiritual life is proved by this chapter! Is it not also manifest in daily experience? The most deeply-taught believer is not exempt from the temptations, weaknesses, and tendencies of the old sinful nature.

**2. The occurrence of special dangers.**—Here again we are face to face with a well-known fact of the spiritual life. Our life may be lived for days, and weeks, and months without anything exceptional occurring, and then suddenly a special temptation may arise which leads us into sin.

**3. The unexpected sources of temptation.**—Abraham's temptation came from the nearest and dearest in his life, the very source whence trouble might have been least expected. So it often is to-day. Satan uses even the holiest of relationships and the closest of ties to bring about sin, and we ought not to be 'ignorant of his devices.'

**4. The combination of high motives and wrong actions.**—Sarah's motives were undoubtedly good, and we may fully believe that Abraham was actuated in the same way, and yet their actions were manifestly wrong. How frequently this remarkable combination of good motive and bad conduct occurs in history and daily life! The end does not justify the means, whatever people may say.

**5. The far-reaching effects of a believer's sin.**—Evil-doing on the part of a child of God is perhaps the very worst thing that can happen, and often has very widespread effects. It has been well pointed out by a modern writer that the existence of Mohammedanism to-day is really to be traced to Abraham's false step; Mohammedanism which is in some respects the deadliest opponent of Christianity. Isaac and Ishmael still struggle in fierce opposition.

**6. The necessity of prolonged waiting on God.**—God's will must be realised in God's way, and God's way often involves waiting God's time. The union of faith and patience (Heb. 6:12-see note) is one of the prime necessities of true spiritual life.

**7. The supreme secret of all true living.**—Abraham could hardly have been living in close touch with God, or his spiritual perception would have been keen enough to detect the danger lurking in Sarah's temptation. The only protection against error in thought and action is found in abiding with God, living in fellowship with Him, listening to His voice in His word, and keeping the pathway to His presence clear by prayer and alertness of attitude before Him. **'The people who know their God will display strength and take action.'** (Da 11:32-see note). (**Genesis - a devotional commentary - Highly Recommended**)

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**Ron Mattoon** - Hagar confesses God with her mouth and calls upon the Lord. She knew that the Lord not only heard her, but was also watching over her. She calls the Lord by the name El Roi, which means "the God who sees". She names the well Beer-la-hai-roi in honor of the Lord. This means "The well of the Living One who seeth me" or "The well of continuing to live after seeing God". Hagar found great peace and comfort in the fact that God was watching over her. God is watching over us too. What does the Bible say about what the Lord sees?

#### **What God Sees in Genesis**

- Corruption-God saw the wickedness of man on earth. 6:5
- City-The Lord came to see the city and the tower. 11:5
- Cruelty-God saw the cruelty to Hagar. 16:13, 14
- Contempt-God saw Laban's treatment of Jacob. 31:12
- Calamity-God saw the afflictions of Jacob. 31:42
- Carnality-Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord. 38:7

#### **Some of the Things that God Sees**

- Right deeds-Deut. 13:18
- Evil deeds-1 Kings 16:25
- Everywhere and Everything-2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 15:3
- The Ways of the mighty man-Job 24:23
- The Righteous-Job 36:7
- The Nations-Psalm 66:7
- The Faithful-Psalm 101:6
- The Baby in the Womb-Psalm 139:16
- Iniquity-Jeremiah 16:17
- Years and Time-Psalm 90:4
- The Death of the Saints-Psalm 116:15
- Our Hearts-1 Samuel 16:7
- Affliction-Exodus 3:7

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#### **F B Meyer (Our Daily Walk) -- GOD'S THOUGHT OF ME**

"Thou art a God that seeth me."--Gen. 16:13 (R.V. marg.).

"How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God."--Ps. 139:17.

HAGAR WAS an Egyptian slave-girl, who had been brought up amid the idolatries of Egypt, and had no sort of idea that the gods had any personal interest in so insignificant a human atom as she was. Probably in Abraham's encampment she had heard of Jehovah, but would doubtless think of Him as being equally outside the limits of her little life. What care should the God of her master and mistress have for her, as she fled from the harsh treatment of Sarah, and was in danger of perishing in the lonely desert! Then, suddenly, in her despair, she heard the voice of the Angel-Jehovah speaking to her, and she called Him "The Living One who seeth me".



To her the thought was an inspiration and comfort, enabling her to return and submit herself to Sarah. But to many these words have been a note of fear and judgment. They have thought of God as spying upon their evil ways, and have shrunk from the thought of His eye seeing them. That thought, however, is not the significance of these inspiring words, but that we can never wander into the far country, or take one weary step in loneliness without the tender notice of God our Father, who notices even the sparrow that falls to the ground.

The Psalmist had the same thought when he wrote the 139th Psalm. When he says that God knows his downsitting and uprising, that his thoughts and ways are all open to His Almighty Friend, it is in a tone of rapturous gladness. It is the prerogative of friendship to love the presence and thought of a friend, and the crowning characteristic of Christianity is that we are admitted into personal friendship with our Lord. He knows our thoughts afar off. With an instant sympathy He enters into our anxieties and discouragements. Wherever we go He precedes and brings up the rear; we are beset by His care behind and before. Let every reader open the door to this great Friend, remembering that His one test is obedience: "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Thus you will find His presence the delight of your life (Rev. 3:20).

PRAYER- We thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast been about our path, considering all our ways, and encompassing us with blessing. Thine eye has been upon us to deliver our soul from death, and to be our help and shield. For all Thy gracious care we thank Thee. AMEN.

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### **F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily Genesis 16:9.**

POOR Hagar! No wonder that she fled. Her proud Arab independence and the sense of coming motherhood made her rebel against Sarah's hard dealings. We have often meditated flight, if we have not actually fled from intolerable conditions. Of course, when God opens the door out of a dungeon we need not hesitate, as Peter did, to rise and follow. But this is very different to flight from the post of duty.

**Our Cross.**--For Hagar, Sarah; for Hannah, Penninah; for David, Joab; for Jesus, Judas; for Paul, Alexander the coppersmith. Life assumes hard and forbidding aspects. Sometimes the cross is not a person, but a trial, the pressure of a slow and lingering disease; the demand for grinding and persistent toil; the weight of overmastering anxiety for those dearer than life, who have no knowledge of God.

**Our Demeanor.**--Return and submit. We are apt to suppose that we shall get rest and peace elsewhere. It is not so, however. Nowhere else shall we find the path less rugged, or the pillow less hard. To evade the yoke will not give us heartsease. The Master's advice is that we shall take His yoke, and bear it as He did; remain where God has put us, till He shows us another place; and bear what He ordains and permits, even though it comes through the means of others.

**Our Faith.**--We cannot patiently submit to our lot unless we believe that what God permits is as much His will as what He appoints. Behind Sarah's hard dealings we must behold His permissive providence. Through all the discipline of life we must believe that God has a purpose of unfailing love and wisdom. Then our submission is not stoicism, but loving acquiescence in our Father's will.

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**Tony Evans** - Hagar was pregnant with Abraham's child, but Sarah drove her out of the house (Genesis 16:6). Hagar sat out by herself in the desert with no one to care for her. She was in distress, wondering, "How am I going to make it?" But the angel of the Lord came to Hagar and told her, "Wipe those tears. Everything is going to be all right. Return to Sarah's house. I will take care of you." Then Hagar called the God who spoke to her El Roi, "the God who sees" (v. 13). Even in Hagar's loneliness and distress, she wasn't alone. The all-present God saw her and took note of her need. This was important to Hagar because later Sarah sent her packing for good (see Genesis 21:14), and Hagar became a single parent, alone with her son in the scorching desert. (Our God is awesome)

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### **Our Daily Bread devotion - Thou God Seest Me (Ge 16:13)**

The following comforting comments were found in a clipping sent to us by an interested reader: "A child in Burma was permitted by his parents to go to a mission school in order that he might learn to read. By and by they found he was losing faith in the idols. This made them feel very sad. So the father took the lad to one of the gayest of the temples where the fragrance of incense filled the air. There he showed him the glittering images covered with gold and silver ornaments and surrounded by flowers and candles.

"Here," said the father, "is a god you can see! The Christians cannot show you their God."

"Yes," said the child, "we can see your god, but he cannot see us. We cannot see the Christian's God, but He sees us all the time!"

Was not this child wise in choosing the God from whom even the thoughts of the heart cannot be hidden?"

How reassuring the truth that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous" so that we can say with Hagar, "Thou God seest me" (Ge 16:13). How precious the teaching of the Bible about the eyes of the Lord.

Psalm 32:8-note tells us,

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye."

And we read in Psalm 33:18-note,

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, upon those who hope in his mercy."

1Peter 3:12-note tells us that

"the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous"

Child of God, perhaps unnoticed, or even forgotten and neglected by others, remember, you too can say with assurance, **Thou God seest me!** His eyes are not only upon you, but His ears are open unto your cry (cp He 2:18-note).

With the little child in Burma we as Christians can rejoice that although we are not able to see our God, we do know and have this assurance that He sees us all the time!

Sweet thought! We have a Friend above,  
Our weary, faltering steps to guide,  
He follows with His eye of love  
The precious ones for whom He died. —Anon.

**It is comforting to know that He who "guides us with His eye"  
sees tomorrow clearer than we see today!—Bosch**

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**God Sees You** - Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, was being treated unkindly by Sarah, so she fled into the wilderness. As Hagar stood beside a spring in that desolate and lonely place, the Angel of the Lord visited her. He assured her that God Himself was aware of her situation. Hagar responded, "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees" (Genesis 16:13). She found great comfort in knowing that the Lord God saw her and knew about her distress. You and I can have that same confidence in God's watchcare. We can be sure that the Lord God is with us wherever we go, and He knows everything that happens to us. As the all-powerful One, He is able to solve every problem, no matter how overwhelming or perplexing it may be. We are never alone, never forgotten, and never beyond hope. Whatever your troubling circumstances are, whether you're afflicted by illness or injury, brokenhearted over the loss of a loved one, or disillusioned because your dearest friend has betrayed or rejected you, God knows and cares. You may be deeply depressed, or perhaps you're plagued by loneliness and discouragement. But you can be confident that you are under God's watchful eye. Yes, like Hagar, you can know that God sees you. — Richard De Haan

Beneath His watchful eye  
His saints securely dwell;  
That hand which bears all nature up  
Shall guard His children well. —Doddridge

**We need not fear the perils around us  
because the eye of the Lord is always upon us.**

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**Oswald Chambers** - Whenever God gives a vision to a saint, He puts him, as it were, in the shadow of His hand, and the saint's duty is to be still and listen. There is a darkness which comes from excess of light, and then is the time to listen. Genesis 16 is an illustration of listening to good advice when it is dark instead of waiting for God to send the light. When God gives a vision and darkness follows, wait. God will make you in accordance with the vision He has given if you will wait His time. Never try and help God fulfil His word. (My Utmost for His Highest)

**Tony Evans** - Single parent, God knows what you and your children need. The reason God gave Ishmael his name was so that every time Hagar used that name, she would remember something about God. The Angel of the Lord told her to call him Ishmael so that every time she spoke his name she would remember that “God knows.”

That’s the beauty of the grace of God for a single parent. Hagar is out on her own with no help, but God says, “I know.” He goes on to say in Ge 16:11 that she would have a son and that they would be OK “because the Lord has given heed to your affliction” (Ge 16:11).

Now notice Ge 16:13: “Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, ‘Thou art a God who sees.’ ” The Hebrew word for the name Hagar gave to God is El Roi. Do you know that God sees? He sees the circumstances you are in. He sees you out there in the desert all alone with no one to provide for and protect you. He is not unaware of what you are going through. No matter what your family situation may be, no matter what your need or loss, God says, “I see. I am taking heed. I know.”

Ge 16:15 records the birth of Ishmael and his naming by Abram, obviously under God’s direction. Now every time Abram called Ishmael by name, he too would be reminded of the mess he had made. He would remember, “God knows the situation I have created.”

The Angel of the Lord showed up in a bad situation, but the saga of Hagar does not end here. Turn over to Genesis 21:1-21 and look at the conclusion of the story. Hagar has gone back to Sarah, as the Lord told her to do. And by now Sarah has had Isaac, the son of promise whom she and Abraham (their names were changed in Ge 17:5, 15-**See significance of Change of Names in Covenant- The Oneness of Covenant**) were waiting for all along.

Both mothers and their sons were living in the same tent. And there was trouble. Sarah saw Ishmael making fun of Isaac, the son of promise (Ge 21:9). She did not like that at all. Ishmael was a teenager now. Teenagers will do that. But Sarah said, “Not in my house you won’t!” Abraham didn’t like this fuss any better than he did the first one, but Sarah demanded that he give Hagar her marching papers. Abraham was very distressed, but God assured him that He was in control and that He would personally care for Hagar and Ishmael (Ge 21:12). So according to Ge 21:14, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away from his house to wander in the wilderness alone. Hagar was now a bona fide single mother.

Soon the water Abraham gave to her and the boy was used up, and she left him so that she wouldn’t have to watch him die (Ge 21:15–16). But the Angel of God (Jesus, before His birth in Bethlehem) showed up again, assuring Hagar that God knew exactly what was happening and would not only keep her and Ishmael alive but would make a great nation out of him (Ge 21:17–18). This is a classic single-parent scenario—one that, with a few changes of detail and geography, could easily be repeated today. Hagar lost her home, she had a teenaged son to take care of, she was on the streets, so to speak, with no money in her pockets. She was thirsty and probably hungry. She feared that her boy would die. So in despair she sat down and cried. That’s when Jesus Christ showed up in His Old Testament form. He asked Hagar, “What is the matter with you?” (Ge 21:17). Didn’t He know the fix she was in? Of course He did. He was saying, “Hagar, have you forgotten what I did for you earlier? Have you forgotten how I found you out in the wilderness when you were pregnant and Sarah had chased you away? Do you think I am going to remember you one minute and forget you the next? You yourself said I am the God who sees. Do you think I have gone blind?”

#### “THE GOD WHO SEES” YOU

Single parent, God has not gone blind. He sees and knows. You may be in a far from ideal situation, but you have an ideal God. You have got a God who, when your husband and the father of your baby kicks you out, will turn into a husband, if necessary, and be a Father to your baby. God will always provide. Why? Because His name is El Roi, “the God who sees.” He is the way out of your circumstance. Now I can’t promise you that He will bring you a mate or a home or whatever. But I can tell you that He sees that baby, He hears that baby cry. He says, “Remember, I named Ishmael. And any baby who has My name, I am going to take care of.”

That is the beauty of dedicating children to the Lord—you give that child God’s name. And when you give that child God’s name, God takes responsibility for that child’s well-being. So God’s message to Hagar was, “Young lady, have you forgotten who I am?”

Genesis 21:18–21, the final chapter of this biblical saga, shows how God fulfilled His word. **The well Hagar saw in Ge 21:19 was there all the time, but she was so busy crying and forgetting God that she stopped trusting, she stopped looking for God. How many times has God opened your eyes and shown you a well, a source of supply, when you did not see any way, with no husband, that you could feed your babies? How many times has God opened your eyes and shown you how you can make it on one person’s salary?** (Tony Evans Speaks Out on Single Parenting)

MARCH—4 - And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi.—Genesis 16:13, 14.

**Robert Hawker** - Behold, my soul, what very blessed instructions arise out of this scripture. Beg of God the Holy Ghost to make thy present evening meditation of it sweet. The words themselves are the reflection of Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah, when she fled from her mistress into the wilderness. In a situation of great distress, the Lord manifested himself to her, and the conclusion she drew from it was, as is expressed, "Thou God seest me." This, indeed, was the name she gave unto the Lord, as if henceforth she would know the Lord in all his mercies by this name. Sweet thought! Jesus is known by his name, and in his name his grace is revealed. But Hagar added another delightful reflection, "for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" As if she had said, "And hath the grace of God, looking upon me, wrought grace in me?" But the words may be read differently, and some indeed read them so: "Have I looked for the Lord, when the Lord looked after me?" "Alas! I thought not of him until that he called me by his grace." Here is another delightful thought of Hagar's, and in perfect harmony with the gospel of Jesus. "For if we love God, it is because he first loved us." And there is another reflection as interesting as either: "Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;" that is, "the well of him that liveth and looketh on." This became Hagar's memorial, as if she would for ever perpetuate the name of Him that looked on and regarded her sorrow. This well, this place, this sacred spot, shall be Hagar's Bethel! It shall tell every one that passeth by, Here the Lord wrought, and here he manifested grace to a poor handmaid. Precious scripture of a precious God! Who but must feel delight in beholding Hagar's faith? And who but must find cause to bless God, both for giving that faith, and affording so favourable an occasion for the exercise of it? And shall I not, and will not you, reader, gather some of the many delightful instructions from it, for our own use, which it is so highly calculated to bring? Did the angel of the Lord look on Hagar, and doth he not look on every child of his? Am I at any time looking after Jesus, and is not Jesus looking after me? Oh! what a volume of encouragement ariseth from this one view, to persevere in looking after him and in waiting for him! that before I thought of him, or was looking after him, Jesus was both caring and looking upon me! It is impossible to be beforehand with God. Put down, then, my soul, this conclusion from this blessed scripture, that in every place, in every state, upon every occasion, thy Jesus liveth, and looketh on. And do thou call thy Lord by the same name as Hagar did, that speaketh to thee in every place, and by every providence, "Thou God seest me." And never, never forget, when thou art hardest put to it, and art seeking Jesus, sorrowing, though to thy blind eye he doth not so immediately appear, yet he is still seeing and following thee, even when thou art not seeking and following after him. Let this be in thy constant remembrance: and make every spot that is memorable like the well Beer-lahai-roi, to draw water of salvation from; for in every one it is the well of Him that liveth, and looketh on. Precious Lord Jesus! henceforth grant me grace, that while thou art looking after me with love and favour, I may be looking unto thee with faith and praise. And through every step of my wilderness state, while going home to my Father's house, let this be my comfort and the burden of my song in this house of my pilgrimage, "Thou God seest me." (The Poor Man's Evening Portion)

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**Alan Carr on El Roi** - the same God Who saw Hagar has His eye on you. He knows where you are. He sees what you are going through. I would like to draw preach around the phrase found in verse 13 that says, "Thou God seest me". I would like to try and preach about God's omniscience. I want you to see the truth that He sees you. I want you to see the truth that He sees you, but it is not with disinterest. He sees you and He cares about you. I want you to come to understand that you are "the apple of His eye", Ps 17:8; Zech. 2:8.

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**Matthew Henry** - Ge 16:7-16 Hagar was out of her place, and out of the way of her duty, and going further astray, when the Angel found her. It is a great mercy to be stopped in a sinful way, either by conscience or by providence. Whence comest thou? Consider that thou art running from duty, and the privileges thou wast blest with in Abram's tent. It is good to live in a religious family, which those ought to consider who have this advantage. Whither wilt thou go? Thou art running into sin; if Hagar return to Egypt, she will return to idol gods, and into danger in the wilderness through which she must travel. Recollecting who we are, would often teach us our duty. Inquiring whence we came, would show us our sin and folly. Considering whither we shall go, discovers our danger and misery. And those who leave their space and duty, must hasten their return, how mortifying soever it be. The declaration of the Angel, I will, shows this Angel was the eternal Word and Son of God. Hagar could not but admire the Lord's mercy, and feel, Have I, who am so unworthy, been favoured with a gracious visit from the Lord? She was brought to a better temper, returned, and by her behaviour softened Sarai, and received more gentle treatment. Would that we were always suitably impressed with this thought, Thou God seest me!

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**Ray Pritchard** - Hagar Gives Birth to Ishmael Ge 16:15-16 The final two verses tell us that Hagar went home to give birth to Ishmael. This speaks volumes about her faith in God. Why would she dare to go home after Sarah had mistreated her?

1. She believed she could trust God in spite of her circumstances.
2. She concluded that God's goodness outweighed Sarah's hostility.
3. She knew that if God had called her, he could take care of her.

You have heard it said before, but I will say it again. The safest place for any Christian is in the center of his will. Strange as it may seem, it was safe for Hagar to be under Sarah's cruel mistreatment in the will of God than to be out on her own and out of God's will. I remind you that she had no guarantees as to how Sarah would treat her. Perhaps the mistreatment and snide comments continued for years. I tend to think they did. Human nature being what it is, it's easy to believe that Sarah's deep jealousy would continually provoke conflict. **Here is a simple application to ponder: We never solve life's problems by running away.** Most of us have tried that route at one time or the other. It never works. Most of the time growth comes only as we face our problems head-on. Finally, I find it instructive that Sarah and Abraham took her back. I'm sure Abraham wanted her back. After all, she was carrying his child. And I'm just as sure Sarah didn't want her back. Nevertheless, they took her in. Did God have time for a poor servant? Did he care about a slave-girl's baby? Would the God of Israel care for an Egyptian slave-girl? Yes, Yes, Yes!!! Hagar's presence was a stinging rebuke to both of them for their sins! They couldn't look at her without being reminded of their folly. "The whole Christian life is a life of repentance." Even the name Ishmael served as a constant voice from the past, reminding them that God had heard the cries of the despised servant girl. ([Doing the Right Thing in the Wrong Way](#))

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J R Miller's Yearbook July 18

"As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand." 1 Kings 17:1

"You are the God who sees me!" Genesis 16:13.

We all stand in the presence of God. His eye is ever upon us. His face ever beams its light upon us. We all believe this, and say it often with our lips; yet **many of us do not really get the truth into our heart! If we did—it would make holier people of us** We would not slight our work as now we do so often, if we were truly conscious that God is looking on us as we work! This consciousness of the presence of God, would also give us hope and courage in darkness or danger; like Hagar, who said, "You are the God who sees me!" Some people think of the omniscience of God—as a reason for fear and terror. But to Hagar, it meant divine love and care. God had not forgotten her, nor forsaken her. She was cast out of her earthly home—but the Lord saw her and took her up. If we are God's children, the thought of our Father's presence should always bring us comfort, assurance, and a wonderful sense of security. It is a great thing to stand before God, to be conscious of His eye upon us, and to know Him so well as not to be afraid of Him.

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C H Spurgeon's illustration of Omniscience - God Sees - A plate of sweet cakes was brought in and placed upon the table. Two children played upon the hearth rug before the fire. 'Oh, I want one of these cakes!' cried the little boy, jumping up as soon as his mother went out, and going on tiptoe towards the table. 'No, no,' said his sister, pulling him back; 'no, no; you must not touch.' 'Mother won't know it; she did not count them,' he cried, shaking her off, and stretching out his hand. 'If she didn't, perhaps God counted,' answered the other. The little boy's hand was stayed. Yes, children, be sure that God counts! children's Missionary Recorder 1852.

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J J Knap - June 14 God, Thou Seest Me Gen. 16:13

There was a tone of holy surprise in the exclamation of Hagar when she sat down at a well in the desert, and was sought and found by the Angel of the Lord: "Thou God seest!" The Egyptian servant, who had lived long in Abram's tent and who was even closely involved with him, had at least learned something concerning the true God. However, when she had fled from Sarai, and roamed all by herself through the wilderness with the great sorrow that she had brought this upon herself by her own fault, she could not have thought that the eye of the Lord followed her from step to step. When she experienced that the Lord was also there, and made her confess her guilt that she was fleeing from the face of Sarai, and showed her the right but painful way to return and to humble herself before her mistress,—no, then she did not turn away her ears, but, surprised by a goodness that even followed and overtook a runaway servant, she called the Lord a new name: "Thou God seest," that is to say, "Thou art a God who seest and who is seen by a sinful human being."

**A God who seeth**,—that is His name! He sees us where we may be and what we may be doing, not the least in loneliness, when our feet, like those of Hagar, walk on paths that are not His. The Egyptian servant thought that she was all alone and left by all. However, now it proved from the words that the Angel of the Lord addressed to her, that He knew her whole life's history and that

He was completely familiar with what had taken place in Abram's tent. He did not see her now for the first time, but the divine eye had watched over her upon all her ways. It had taken notice of the sorrow of her heart with a carefulness from which nothing escaped. Exactly because everything was known to the Lord, He could now look upon her with a glance that was severe and admonishing indeed, but at the same time merciful and compassionate.

**A God who seeth**,—that is His name! He regards our sorrow, our cross, our humiliation at the hand of high-minded people. He also beholds our shortcomings and sins, and He does not justify them, but He punishes us concerning them in our conscience. He prefers to meet with us in loneliness, and He does not even wait till we go with our soul to Him, but He is the first One in everything. In this way He met us in our misery in the Son of His love, of whom the Angel of the Lord was a type. Whoever has met once in grace with that Messenger of God, will understand the scope of the words of blessed surprise: Thou God seest me," because in Jesus Christ He is not only a God who beholds, but He is also seen by us in Him in the riches of His compassion. (The Loins Girded)

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### **J. R. Miller - His unsleeping watchfulness - "You are the God who sees me!" Genesis 16:13**

Go where we may, we cannot get away from the calm, clear gaze of the Divine Eye! Neither in the blue depths of the heavens, nor in the dark abysses of the grave — can we hide away from God. If we could take the morning sunbeams for wings, and fly away on them with all the swiftness of light to the remotest bounds of space — we could not get beyond the reach of the Divine Eye. If we creep into the darkness, darkness so deep and dense that no human eye can behold us — still God sees us as clearly as if we stood in the bright noon-day sunshine! Darkness hides not from Him. Night shines to His eye, as brightly as day.

When we know that God loves us, there is infinite comfort in this thought of His unsleeping watchfulness. It is our Father who watches us! There ought also to be wondrous encouragement and inspiration in this consciousness.

While the Eye of divine love is looking upon us, we should always strive to be pleasing to Him in all things!

"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea — even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast! If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to You; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to You!" Psalm 139:9-12

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In writing about *El-Roi* in "*The Character of God*," **R. C. Sproul** said: "There are many things in my life that I do not want to put under the gaze of Christ. Yet I know there is nothing hidden from Him. He knows me better than my wife knows me. And yet He loves me. This is the most amazing thing of all about God's grace. It would be one thing for Him to love us if we could fool Him into thinking that we were better than we actually are. But He knows better. He knows all there is to know about us, including those things that could destroy our reputation. He is minutely and acutely aware of every skeleton in every closet. And He loves us."

That God sees everything, even our darkest secrets, and **still loves us** gives Christians our great hope. The growing realization of God's foresight and care should also help you to be completely honest before him. Identify one or two areas where do not feel comfortable with honesty. Prayerfully commit yourself to full disclosure before his face. Ask that your truth may lead to victory in his providence ([See this attribute of God](#)).

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God sees and He knows if what has occurred in our lives involves injustices against us. Yes, God is sovereign and in total control and there is nothing that comes into our life that God has not allowed but at the same time He is one who sees all that we have had to deal with. He knows all that we have had to go through in our lives. He knows the times we have been mistreated in our lives. He knows those situations that have involved physical or verbal abuse. He knows that even in all of these afflictions there is the potential to bring Him glory. Remember that because God is sovereign, if what occurred in our lives (or is occurring right now) did not have the potential to conform us to the image of His Son, then He would not have allowed it to occur but He would have intervened. This should give you great peace in the midst of the storm, an inner peace that comes from the fact that He is the God Who sees and that He has not missed any of the events in our lives...the peace is that He knows.

As has been repeatedly emphasized in this study of *El Roi*, one of the most messages that this name conveys is that there is nowhere we can flee from His presence — He is there. There is a peace that comes from knowing He is there. There is a peace that comes by knowing that He has seen the sins others may have committed against us. It is His responsibility to vindicate us — it is not our responsibility. A genuine understanding of *El Roi* has the potential of giving you the grace of forgiveness if you are harboring ill will toward someone because of past events.

He is Elohim, the Creator – He created us for His glory. He El Elyon, the Sovereign God – He is in control and whatever events have been allowed in our lives have been allowed by a God of perfect justice and love who filters all things through His hands of love. Knowing the truth that GOD SEES, we can run to Him and hide ourselves in His sufficiency. El Roi is the great name of God to remember when you are going through trials - El Roi sees. You may not see him but he sees you. He knows what you are going through.

Can you identify with [Hagar](#), in great distress, in a crisis of belief? Have you been unfairly abused or mistreated? Have you been unjustifiably used by another person? Have you been fired without justification? Have you been rejected by family members? Are you thinking that there's no one who knows what you're going through? No one who cares? Well, you're wrong. *El-Roi*, the mighty One who sees, knows everything about you. And, even if you've brought some of this trouble upon yourself through your foolish decisions, He still cares! He knows your name ("*Hagar*"), where you have come from and where you are going and He wants to bless you with the assurance that He is in control of the beginning and the end because He is the God Who sees. He watches over you, seeing and knowing all that happens and He comes to your aid.

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**Hastings Bible Dictionary of the NT** (See also [article on Omniscience](#) in ISBE) - **OMNISCIENCE** (of Christ).—There are such great differences in the mental grasp of different persons, that no one can prove that all knowledge may not have been open to the human mind of Christ. On the other hand, no one can assert that because of His Divine nature in union with His human nature He must have possessed and exercised such powers. It seems to be left quite open to us, unbiassed in the one direction or in the other, to deal with each department of His knowledge,—as of history before His coming, of nature, and of the future,—and to come to the conclusion that His knowledge included any matter or did not include it, without introducing the dogmatic fallacy that He must, because of His omniscience, have known this or that. Apart from assurance of what God has done, we cannot say what He must do. And this applies to the conditions of the earthly life which it seemed good to the Father that Christ should live. When we come to the testimony of Scripture, we find Christ growing in knowledge (Luke 2:52), and afterwards limiting Himself to be a teacher not even in matters of civil justice (Luke 12:14), but only in the highest region of religion. In a sense, every prophet who says what God will do, claims a knowledge which dominates all the details of God's providence in every department (1 John 2:20 'Ye know all things'). And in this sense, and in higher measure, Christ was omniscient. In the words of Luther, 'He was full of grace and wisdom, and able to judge upon and teach all that came before Him' (Dorner, *Person of Christ*, ii. 92). Thus His disciples said of Him, 'Thou knowest all things' (John 16:30; John 21:17). 'He knew what was in man' (John 2:25). It is usual to refer to Mark 13:32, where Christ disclaims knowledge of the day of His coming, as evidence that there were limitations to our Lord's knowledge. On the other hand, in His discourse with Nathanael and with the woman of Samaria, He showed supernatural knowledge. See, further, artt. Accommodation, Kenosis.

Literature.—Liddon, *Bamp. Lect.* 456 ff.; Gore, *Bamp. Lect.* 147 ff.; Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, ii. 341 ff.; Beyschlag, *Leben Jesu*, i. 171 ff., *NT Theol.* i. 73 ff.; Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, p. 287 ff.; Powell, *Principle of the Incarnation*, 125 ff. T. Gregory

## Torrey's Topic Protection of God

God is able to afford -1 Peter 1:5; Jude 1:24

God is faithful to afford -1 Thessalonians 5:23,24; 2Th 3:3

### OF GOD IS

Indispensable -Psalms 127:1

Seasonable -Psalms 46:1

Unfailing -Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:5

Effectual -John 10:28, 29, 30; 2 Corinthians 12:9

Uninterrupted -Psalms 121:3

Encouraging -Isaiah 41:10; 50:7

Perpetual -Psalms 121:8

Often afforded through means inadequate in themselves -Jdg 7:7; 1Sa 17:45,50; 2Chr 14:11

### IS AFFORDED TO

Those who hearken to God -Proverbs 1:33

Returning sinners -Job 22:23,25  
The perfect in heart -2 Chronicles 16:9  
The poor -Psalms 14:6; 72:12, 13, 14  
The oppressed -Psalms 9:9  
The Church -Psalms 48:3; Zechariah 2:4,5

### **IS VOUCHSAFED TO SAINTS IN**

Preserving them -Psalms 145:20  
Strengthening them -2 Timothy 4:17  
Upholding them -Psalms 37:17,24; 63:8  
Keeping their feet -1 Samuel 2:9; Proverbs 3:26  
Keeping them from evil -2 Thessalonians 3:3  
Keeping them from falling -Jude 1:24  
Keeping them in the way -Exodus 23:20  
Keeping them from temptation -Revelation 3:10  
Providing a refuge for them -Proverbs 14:26; Isaiah 4:6; 32:2  
Defending them against their enemies -Deut 20:1, 2, 3, 4; 33:27; Isa 59:19  
Defeating the counsels of enemies -Isaiah 8:10  
Temptation -1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9  
Persecution -Luke 21:18  
Calamities -Psalms 57:1; 59:16  
All dangers -Psalms 91:3, 4, 5, 6, 7  
All places -Genesis 28:15; 2 Chronicles 16:9  
Sleep -Psalms 3:5; 4:8; Proverbs 3:24  
Death -Psalms 23:4

### **SAINTS**

Acknowledge God as their -Psalms 18:2; 62:2; 89:18  
Pray for -Psalms 17:5,8; Isaiah 51:9  
Praise God for -Psalms 5:11

### **WITHDRAWN FROM THE**

Disobedient -Leviticus 26:14, 15, 16, 17  
Backsliding -Joshua 23:12,13; Judges 10:13  
Presumptuous -Numbers 14:40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45  
Unbelieving -Isaiah 7:9  
Obstinately impenitent -Matthew 23:38

### **NOT TO BE FOUND IN**

Idols -Deuteronomy 32:37-39; Isaiah 46:7  
Man -Psalms 146:3; Isaiah 30:7  
Riches -Proverbs 11:4,28; Zephaniah 1:18  
Hosts -Joshua 11:4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Psalms 33:16  
Horses -Psalms 33:17; Proverbs 21:31

**Illustrated** -Deut 32:11; Ps 125:1,2; Pr 18:10; Isa 25:4; 31:5; Lk 13:34

### **Exemplified**

Abraham -Genesis 15:1  
Jacob -Genesis 48:16  
Joseph -Genesis 49:23-25  
Israel -Joshua 24:17  
David -Psalms 18:1,2  
Shadrach &c -Daniel 3:28  
Daniel -Daniel 6:22  
Peter -Acts 12:4, 5, 6, 7



## J C Ryle discusses the power of the doctrine of God's Omniscience([Where is Your God, My Boy?](#)) -

However hard it is to comprehend this doctrine (omnipresence)—it is one which is most useful and wholesome for our souls. To keep continually in mind—that God is always present with us; to live always as in God's sight; to act and speak and think as always under His eye—all this is eminently calculated to have a good effect upon our souls. Wide, and deep, and searching, and piercing—is the influence of that one thought, "You are the God who sees me!" (**Genesis 16:13**)

**(1) The thought of God's presence—is a loud call to humility.** How much which is evil and defective, must the all-seeing eye—see in everyone of us! How small a part of our character is really known by man! "Man looks on the outward appearance—but the Lord looks on the heart!" (1 Sam. 16:7). Man does not always see us—but the Lord is always looking at us—morning, noon, and night! Who has not need to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

**(2) The thought of God's presence—is a crushing proof of our need of Jesus Christ** What hope of salvation could we have, if there was not a Mediator between God and man? Before the eye of the ever-present God—our best righteousness is filthy rags—and our best doings are full of imperfection! Where would we be—if there was not a fountain open for all sin—even the blood of Christ! Without Christ—the prospect of death, judgment, and eternity would drive us to despair!

**(3) The thought of God's presence—teaches the folly of hypocrisy in religion.** What can be more silly and childish—than to wear a mere cloak of Christianity, while we inwardly cleave to sin, when God is ever looking at us and sees us through and through! It is easy to deceive ministers and fellow-Christians, because they often see us only upon Sundays. But God sees us morning, noon, and night—and cannot be deceived. Oh, whatever we are in religion—let us be real and true!

**(4) The thought of God's presence—is a check and curb on the inclination to sin.** The recollection that there is One who is always near us and observing us, who will one day have a reckoning with all mankind—may well keep us back from evil! Happy are those sons and daughters who, when they leave the family home, and launch forth into the world, carry with them the abiding remembrance of God's eye. "My father and mother do not see me—but God does!" This was the feeling which preserved Joseph when tempted in a foreign land: "How can I do this great wickedness—and sin against God!" (Gen. 39:9)

**(5) The thought of God's presence—is a spur to the pursuit of true holiness** The highest standard of sanctification is to "walk with God" as Enoch did, and to "walk before God" as Abraham did. Where is the man who would not strive to live so as to please God—if he realized that God was always standing at his elbow! To get away from God—is the secret aim of the sinner. To get nearer to God—is the longing desire of the saint. The real servants of the Lord are "a people near unto Him." (Psalm 148:14)

**(6) The thought of God's presence—is a comfort in time of public calamity.** When war and famine and pestilence break in upon a land; when the nations are torn by inward divisions, and all order seems in peril—it is cheering to reflect that God sees and knows and is close at hand—that the King of kings is near, and is not asleep.

**(7) The thought of God's presence—is a strong consolation in private trial.** We may be driven from home and native land—and placed at the other side of the world; we may be bereaved of wife and children and friends—and left alone, like the last tree in a forest. But we can never go to any place where God is not; and under no circumstances can we be left entirely alone.

Such thoughts as these, are useful and profitable for us all. That man must be in a poor state of soul, who does not feel them to be so. Let it be a settled principle in our religion—never to forget that in every condition and place—that we are under the eye of God! It need not frighten us—if we are true believers. The sins of all believers are cast behind God's back—and even the all-seeing God sees no spot in them! It ought to cheer us—if our Christianity is genuine and sincere. We can then appeal to God with confidence, like David, and say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You—and lead me along the path of everlasting life!" (Psalm 139:23, 24). Great is the mystery of God's omnipresence; but the true man of God can look at it without fear.

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## RELATED RESOURCES OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

- [Onsite summary of Omniscience](#)
- [The Knowledge of God](#) by A. W. Pink
- [The Divine Omniscience](#) by A.W. Tozer
- [What God Is Like](#) by J. Hampton Keathley III
- [His Eye Is On the Sparrow: The Doctrine of God's Omniscience - Psalm 145:4, 5](#) by Ray Pritchard (**recommended**)

- [Of the Omniscience of God](#) by John Gill
- [The Omniscience of God](#) by Thomas Watson (scroll down)
- [Perfect in Knowledge](#) from by Lehman Strauss
- [The Omniscience Of God](#) by David Legge

## OMNISCIENCE

Richard Watson

FROM - Watson's Biblical & Theological Dictionary

This attribute of God is constantly connected in Scripture with his omnipresence, and forms a part of almost every description of that attribute; for, as God is a Spirit, and therefore intelligent, if he is every where, if nothing can exclude him, not even the most solid bodies, nor the minds of intelligent beings, then are all things naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Where he acts, he is; and where he is, he perceives. He understands and considers things absolutely, and as they are in their own natures, powers, properties, differences, together with all the circumstances belonging to them. "Known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world," rather, ἀπ' αἰῶνος, from all eternity; known before they were made, in their possible, and known, now they are made, in their actual, existence. "Lord, thou hast searched me and known me; thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassedst my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. The darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day. The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings; he searcheth their hearts, and understandeth every imagination of their thoughts." Nor is this perfect knowledge to be confined to men or angels; it reaches into the state of the dead, and penetrates the regions of the damned. "Hell," hades, "is naked before him; and destruction," the seats of destruction, "hath no covering." No limits at all are to be set to this perfection: "Great is the Lord, his understanding is infinite."

In Psalms 94, the knowledge of God is argued from the communication of it to men: "Understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planteth the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" This argument is as easy as it is conclusive, obliging all who acknowledge a First Cause, to admit his perfect intelligence, or to take refuge in atheism itself. It fetches not the proof from a distance, but refers us to our bosoms for the constant demonstration that the Lord is a God of knowledge, and that by him actions are weighed. We find in ourselves such qualities as thought and intelligence, power and freedom, &c, for which we have the evidence of consciousness as much as for our own existence. Indeed, it is only by our consciousness of these, that our existence is known to ourselves. We know, likewise, that these are perfections, and that to have them is better than to be without them. We find also that they have not been in us from eternity. They must, therefore, have had a beginning, and consequently some cause, for the very same reason that a being beginning to exist in time requires a cause. Now this cause, as it must be superior to its effect, must have those perfections in a superior degree; and if it be the First Cause it must have them in an infinite or unlimited degree, since bounds or limitations, without a limiter, would be an effect without a cause. If God gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to men of understanding; if he communicates this perfection to his creatures, the inference must be that he himself is possessed of it in a much more eminent degree than they; that his knowledge is deep and intimate, reaching to the very essence of things, theirs but slight and superficial; his clear and distinct, theirs confused and dark; his certain and infallible, theirs doubtful and liable to mistake; his easy and permanent, theirs obtained with much pains, and soon lost again by the defects of memory or age; his universal and extending to all objects, theirs short and narrow, reaching only to some few things, while that which is wanting cannot be numbered; and therefore, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so, as the prophet has told us, are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts.

But his understanding is infinite; a doctrine which the sacred writers not only authoritatively announce, but confirm by referring to the wisdom displayed in his works. The only difference between wisdom and knowledge is, that the former always supposes action, and action directed to an end. But wherever there is wisdom there must be knowledge; and as the wisdom of God in the creation consists in the formation of things which, by themselves, or in combination with others, shall produce certain effects, and that in a variety of operation which is to us boundless, the previous knowledge of the possible qualities and effects inevitably supposes a knowledge which can have no limit. For as creation out of nothing argues a power which is omnipotent; so the knowledge of the possibilities of things which are not (a knowledge which, from the effect, we are sure must exist in God,) argues that such a Being must be omniscient. For all things being not only present to him, but also entirely depending upon him, and having received both their being itself, and all their powers and faculties from him; it is manifest that, as he knows all things that are, so he must likewise know all possibilities of things, that is, all effects that can be. For, being himself alone self-existent, and having alone given to all things all the powers and faculties they are endued with; it is evident he must of necessity know perfectly what all and each of those

powers and faculties, which are derived wholly from himself, can possibly produce: and seeing, at one boundless view, all the possible compositions and divisions, variations and changes, circumstances and dependencies of things; all their possible relations one to another, and their dispositions or fitnesses to certain and respective ends, he must, without possibility of error, know exactly what is best and properest in every one of the infinite possible cases or methods of disposing things; and understand perfectly how to order and direct the respective means, to bring about what he so knows to be, in its kind, or in the whole, the best and fittest in the end. This is what we mean by infinite wisdom.

On the subject of the divine omniscience, many fine sentiments are to be found in the writings of Pagans; for an intelligent First Cause being in any sense admitted, it was most natural and obvious to ascribe to him a perfect knowledge of all things. They acknowledge that nothing is hid from God, who is intimate to our minds, and mingles himself with our very thoughts; nor were they all unaware of the practical tendency of such a doctrine, and of the motive it affords to a cautious and virtuous conduct. But among them it was not held, as by the sacred writers, in connection with other right views of the divine nature, which are essential to give to this its full moral effect. Not only on this subject does the manner in which the Scriptures state the doctrine far transcend that of the wisest Pagan theists; but the moral of the sentiment is infinitely more comprehensive and impressive. With them it is connected with man's state of trial; with a holy law, all the violations of which, in thought, word, and deed, are both infallibly known, and strictly marked; with promises of grace, and of a mild and protecting government as to all who have sought and found the mercy of God in forgiving their sins and admitting them into his family. The wicked are thus reminded, that their hearts are searched, and their sins noted; that the eyes of the Lord are upon their ways; and that their most secret works will be brought to light in the day when God the witness shall become God the judge. But as to the righteous, the eyes of the Lord are said to be over them; that they are kept by him who never slumbers or sleeps; that he is never far from them; that his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in their behalf; that foes, to them invisible, are seen by his eye, and controlled by his arm; and that this great attribute, so appalling to wicked men, affords to them, not only the most influential reason for a perfectly holy temper and conduct, but the strongest motive to trust, and joy, and hope, amidst the changes and afflictions of the present life. Socrates, as well as other philosophers, could express themselves well, so long as they expressed themselves generally, on this subject. The former could say, "Let your own frame instruct you. Does the mind inhabiting your body dispose and govern it with ease? Ought you not then to conclude, that the universal Mind with equal ease actuates and governs universal nature; and that, when you can at once consider the interest of the Athenians at home, in Egypt, and in Sicily, it is not too much for the divine wisdom to take care of the universe?"

These reflections will soon convince you, that the greatness of the divine mind is such, as at once to see all things, hear all things, be present every where, and direct all the affairs of the world." These views are just, but they wanted that connection with others relative both to the divine nature and government, which we see only in the Bible, to render them influential; they neither gave correct moral distinctions nor led to a virtuous practice, no, not in Socrates, who, on some subjects, and especially on the personality of the Deity, and his independence on matter, raised himself far above the rest of his philosophic brethren, but in moral feeling and practice was perhaps as censurable as they. See PRESCIENCE

## Omniscience

**"You God see me.— Genesis 16:13**

**C H Spurgeon**

There are more eyes fixed on man than he wots of: he sees not as he is seen. He thinks himself obscure and unobserved, but let him remember that a cloud of witnesses hold him in full survey. Wherever he is, at every instant, there are beings whose attention is riveted by his doings, and whose gaze is constantly fixed by his actions. Within this Hall, I doubt not, there are myriads of spirits unseen to us—spirits good and spirits evil; upon us tonight the eyes of angels rest: attentively those perfect spirits regard our order; they hear our songs; they observe our prayers; it may be they fly to heaven to convey to their companions news of any sinners who are born of God, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, both when we wake and when we sleep; midnight is peopled with shadows unseen, and daylight has its spirits too. The prince of the power of the air, attended by his squadron of evil spirits, flits through the ether oft; evil spirits watch our halting every instant, while good spirits, battling for the salvation of God's elect, keep us in all our ways and watch over our feet, lest at any time we dash them against a stone. Hosts of invisible beings attend on every one of us at different periods of our lives. We must remember, also, that not only do the spirits of angels, elect or fallen, look on us, but "the spirits of the just made perfect continually observe our conversation. We are taught by the Apostle that the noble army of martyrs, and the glorious company of confessors, are "witnesses of our race to heaven, for he says, "seeing, then, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us. From yon blue heaven the eyes of the glorified look down on us; there the children of God are sitting on their starry thrones. observing whether we manfully uphold the banner around which they fought; they behold our valour, or they detect our cowardice; and they are intent to witness our valiant deeds of noble daring,

or our ignominious retreat in the day of battle.

Remember that, you sons of men, you are not unregarded; you do not pass through this world in unseen obscurity. In darkest shades of night eye glare on you through the gloom. In the brightness of the day angels are spectators of your labours. From heaven there look down upon you spirits who see that finite beings are capable of beholding. But if we think that thought worth treasuring up, there is one which sums up that and drowns it, even as a drop is lost in the ocean; it is the thought, "You God see me. It is nought that angels see me, it is nought that devils watch me, it is nought that the glorified spirits observe me, come pared with the overwhelming truth, that you God at all times see me. Let us dwell on that now, and may God the Spirit make use of it to our spiritual profit!

In the first place, I shall notice the general doctrine, that God observes all men. In the second place, I shall notice the particular doctrine, "You God see me. And in the third place I shall draw from it some practical and comforting inferences to different orders of persons now assembled, each of whom may learn something from this short sentence.

## **I. In the first place, The General Doctrine, that God sees us.**

### **1. This may be easily proved, even from the nature of God.**

It were hard to suppose a God who could not see his own creatures; it were difficult in the extreme to imagine a divinity who could not behold the actions of the works of his hands. The word which the Greeks applied to God implied that he was a God who could see. They called him Theos, and they derived that word, if I read rightly, from the root Theisthai, to see, because they regarded God as being the all-seeing one, whose eye took in the whole universe at a glance, and whose knowledge extended far beyond that of mortals. God Almighty, from his very essence and nature, must be an Omniscient God. Strike out the thought that he sees me, and you extinguish Deity by a single stroke. There were no God if that God had no eyes, for a blind God were no God at all. We could not conceive such an one. Stupid as idolaters maybe, it were very hard to think that even they had fashioned a blind god: even they have given eyes to their gods, though they see not. Juggernaut has eyes stained with blood; and the gods of the ancient Romans had eyes, and some of them were called far-seeing gods. Even the heathen can scarce conceive of a god that has no eyes to see, and certainly we are not so mad as to imagine for a single second that there can be a Deity without the knowledge of everything that is done by man beneath the sun. I say it were as impossible to conceive of a God who did not observe everything, as to conceive of a round square. When we say, "You God, we do, in fact, comprise in the word "God the idea of a God who sees everything, "You God see me.

### **2. Yet, further, we are sure that God must see us, for we are taught in the Scriptures that God is everywhere, and if God be everywhere, what does hinder him from seeing all that is done in every part of his universe?**

God is here: I do not simply live near him, but "in him I live, and move, and have my being.

There is not a particle of this mighty space which is not filled with God: go forth into the pure air, and there is not a particle of it where God is not. In every portion of this earth whereon I tread, and the spot whereon I move, there is God.

"Within your circling power I stand;  
On every side I find your hand:  
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,  
I am surrounded still with God.

Take the wings of the morning and fly beyond the most distant star, but God is there. God is not a being—confined to one place, but he is everywhere; he is there, end there, and there; in the deepest mine man ever bored; in the unfathomable caverns of the ocean; in the heights, towering and lofty; in the gulfs that are deep, which fathom can never reach, God is everywhere. I know from his own words that he is a God who filleth immensity, the heavens are not wide enough for him, he graspeth the sun with one hand and the moon with the other, he stretcheth himself through the unnavigated ether, where the wing of seraph has never been flapped, there is God; and where the solemnity of silence has never been broken by the song of Cherub, there is God. God is everywhere. Conceive space, and God and space are equal. Well, then, if God be everywhere, how can I refrain from believing that God sees me wherever I am? He does not look upon me from a distance: if he did, I might screen myself beneath the shades of night; but he is here, close by my side, and not by me only, but in me; within this heart; where these lungs beat; or where my blood gushes through my veins; or where this pulse is beating, like a muffled drum, my march to death, God is there: within this mouth, in this tongue, in these eyes; in each of you God dwells: he is within you. and around you: he is beside you, and behind, and before. Is not such knowledge too wonderful for you? Is it not high, and you cannot Attain Into it? I say, how can you resist the doctrine, which comes upon you like a flash of lightning, that if God be everywhere he must see everything, and that therefore it is a truth, "You God see me.

### **3. But, lest any should suppose that God may be in a place, and yet slumbering, let me remind him that in every spot to which he can travel, there is, not simply God, but also God's activity.**

Wherever I go I shall find, not a slumbering God, but a God busy about the affairs of this world. Take me to the green sward, and pleasant pasture—why, every little blade of grass there has God's hand in it, making it grow; and every tiny daisy, which a child likes to pluck, looks up with its little eye, and says, "God is in me, circulating my sap, and opening my little flower. Go where you will

through this London, where vegetation is scarcely to be found, look up yonder and see those rolling stars, God is active there: it is his hand that wheels along the stars, and moves the moon in her nightly course. But if there be neither stars nor moon, there are those clouds, heavy with darkness, like the ears of night, who steers them across the sea of azure? Does not the breath of God blowing upon them drive them along the heavens? God is everywhere. not as a slumbering God, but as an active God. I am upon the sea; and there I see God making the everlasting pulse of nature beat in constant ebbs and flows. I am in the pathless desert, but above me screams the vulture, and I see God winging the wild bird's flight. I am shut up in a hermitage; but an insect drops from its leaf, and I see in that insect, life which God preserves and sustains; yea, shut me out from the animate creation, and put me on the barren rock, where moss itself cannot find a footing, and I shall there discern my God bearing up the pillars of the universe, and sustaining that bare rock as a part of the colossal foundation whereon he has built the world.

**“Where'er we turn our gazing eyes,  
Your radiant footsteps shine.  
Ten thousand pleasing wonders rise,  
And speak their source divine.  
The living tribes of countless form  
In earth, and sea, and air,  
The meanest flies, the smallest worms,  
Almighty power declare.**

You shall see God everywhere: if you see him not around you, look within you and is he not there? Is not your blood now flowing through every portion of your body, to and fro your heart? And is not God there active? Do you not know that every pulse you beat needs a volition of Deity as its permit, and yet more, needs an exertion of Divine power as its cause? Do you not know that every breath you breathe needs Deity for its inspiration and expiration, and that you must die if God withdraw that power? If we could look within us, there are mighty works going on in this mortal fabric—the garment of the soul—which would astonish you, and make you see, indeed, that God is not asleep, but that he is active and busy. There is a working God everywhere, a God with his eyes open everywhere, a God with his hands at work everywhere; a God doing something, Not a God slumbering, but a God laboring. Oh! sirs, does not the conviction flash upon your mind with a brightness, against which you cannot shut your eyes, that since God is everywhere, and everywhere active, it follows, as a necessary and unavoidable consequence, that he must see us, and know all our actions and our deeds?

#### **4. I have one more proof to offer which I think to be conclusive.**

God, we may be sure, sees us, when we remember that he can see a thing before it happens. If he beholds an event before it transpires, surely reason dictates, he must see a thing that is happening now. Read those ancient prophecies, read what God said should be the end of Babylon and of Nineveh. just turn to the chapter where you read of Edom's doom, or where you are told that Tyre shall be desolate. then walk through the lands of the East, and see Nineveh and Babylon cast to the ground, the cities ruined; and then reply to this question—Is not God a God of foreknowledge? Can he not see the things that are to come? Ay, there is not a thing which shall transpire in the next cycle of a thousand years which is not already past to the infinite mind of God; there is not a deed which shall be transacted tomorrow, or the next day, or the next, through eternity, if days can be eternal, but God knows it altogether. And if he knows the future, does he not know the present. If his eyes look through the dim haze which veils us from the things of futurity, can he not see that which is standing in the brightness of the present? If he can see a great distance, can he not see near at hand! Surely that Divine Being who discerneth the end from the beginning, must know the things which occur now; and it must be true that “You God see us, even the whole of us, the entire race of man. So much for the general and universally acknowledged doctrine.

#### **II. Now, I come, in the second place, to the special doctrine “You God see me.**

Come now, there is a disadvantage in having so many hearers, as there is always in speaking to more than one at a time, because persons are apt to think, “he does not speak to me. Jesus Christ preached a very successful sermon once when he had but one hearer, because he had the woman sitting on the well, and she could not say that Christ was preaching to her neighbor. He said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come hither. There was something there which smote her heart; she could not evade the confession of her guilt. But in regard to our congregations, the old orator might soon see his prayer answered, “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears, for when the gospel is preached, we lend our ears to everybody; we are accustomed to hear for our neighbours, and not for ourselves. Now, I have no objection to your lending anything else you like, but I have a strong objection to you lending your ears; I shall be glad if you will keep them at home for a minute or two, for I want to make you hear for yourselves this truth “You God see me.

Mark, God sees you—selecting any one out of this congregation—he sees you, he sees you us much as if there were nobody else in the world for him to look at. If I have as many people as there are here to look at, of course my attention must be divided. but the infinite mind of God is able to grasp a million objects at once, and yet to set itself as much upon one, as if there were nothing else but that one; so that you, tonight, are looked at by God as much as if throughout space there were not another creature but yourself Can you conceive that? Suppose the stars blotted out in darkness, suppose the angels dead; imagine the glorified spirits above are all gone, and you are left alone, the last man, and there is God looking at you. What an idea it would be for you to think of—that there was only you to be looked all how steadily he could observe you I how well he would discern you! But mark you, God does

really look at you this night as much, as entirely, as absolutely without division of sight, as if you were the only being his hands had ever made. Can you grasp that? God sees you with all his eyes, with the whole of his sight—you—you—you—you are the particular object of his attention at this very moment. God's eyes are looking down upon you; remember that!

In the next place God sees you entirely. He does not merely note your actions; he does not simply notice what is the appearance of your countenance; he does not merely take into his eyesight what your posture may be; but remember, God sees what you are thinking of; he looks within. God has a window in every man's heart, through which he looks; he does not want you to tell him what you are thinking about—he can see that, he can read right through you. Do you not know that God can read what is written on the rocks at the bottom of the ocean, even though ten thousand fathoms of dark water roll above? And I tell you he can read every word that is in your breasts; he knows every thought, every imagination, every conception, yea every unformed imagination, the thought scarce shot from the bow, reserved in the quiver of the mind; he sees it all, every particle, every atom of it.

**“My thoughts, scarce struggling into births**

**Great God I are known to you:**

**Abroad, at home, still I'm enclosed**

**With your immensity.**

**“Behind I glance, and you art there**

**Before me, shines your name**

**And 'tis your strong almighty hand**

**Sustains my tender frame.**

Can you appropriate that thought? From the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, God is examining you now; his scalpel is in your heart, his lancet in your breast. he is searching your heart and trying your reins; he knows you behind and before. “You God see me; you see me entirely.

Note again, God sees you constantly. You are sometimes watched by man, and then your conversation is tolerably correct; at other times you seek retirement, and you indulge yourselves in things which you would not dare to do before the gaze of your fellow creatures. But recollect, wherever you are, God sees you; you may lay yourselves down by the side of the hidden brook where the willows shelter you, where all is still, without a sound—God is there looking at you! You may retire to your chamber, and draw the curtains of your couch, and throw yourself down for repose in midnight's gloomiest shade—God sees you there! I remember going into a castle sometime ago, down many a winding stair, round and round, and round, and round, where light never penetrated; at last I came to a space, very narrow. about the length of a man. “There, said the keeper, such—and—such—a—one was shut up for so many years, a ray of light never having penetrated: sometimes they tortured him, but his shrieks never reached through the thickness of these walls, and never ascended that winding staircase: here he died, and there, sir, he was buried, pointing to the ground. But though that man had none on earth to see him, God saw him. Yea, you may shut me up for ever, where ear shall never hear my prayer, where eye shall never see my misery; but one eye shall look upon me, and one countenance smile on me, if I suffer for righteousness' sake. If for Christ's sake I am in prison, one hand shall be upon me, and one voice shall say, “Fear not; I will help you—at all times, in all places, in all your thoughts, in all your acts, in all your privacy, in an your public doings, at every season, this is true, “You God see me

Yet once more, “You God see me, supremely. I can see myself, but not as well as either my friends or foes. Men can see me better than I can see myself, but man cannot see me as God sees me. A man skilled in the human heart might interpret my deeds and translate their motives, but he could not read my heart as God can read it. None can tell another as God can tell us all: we do not know ourselves as God knows us: with all your self knowledge, with all you have been told by others, God knows you more fully than you know yourself: no eye can see you as God sees you—you may act in daylight; you may not be ashamed of your actions? you may stand up before men and say, “I am a public man, I wish to be observed and noticed: you may have an your deeds chronicled, and all men may hear of them, but I wot men will never know you as God will know you; and if you could be chained, as Paul was, with a soldier at your arm; if he were with you night and day, sleeping with you. rising with you; if he could hear all your thoughts, he could not know you as God knows you, for God sees you superlatively and supremely.

Let me now apply that to you: “You God see me. This is true of each of you; try and think of it for a moment. Even as my eye rests on you, so, in a far, far greater sense does God's eye rest on you; standing, sitting, wherever you are, this is true, “You God see me. It is said that when you heard Rowland Hill, it you were stuck in a window, or farther away at the door, you always had the conviction that he was preaching at you. Oh I I wish I could preach like that; if I could make you feel that I was preaching at you in particular; that I singled you out, and shot every word at you, then I should hope for some effect. Try and think, then, “You God see me.

### **III. Now I come to different inferences for different persons, to different purposes.**

First, to the prayerful. Prayerful man, prayerful woman, here is a consolation—God sees you: and if he can see you, surely he can hear you. Why, we can often hear people, when we cannot see them. If God is so near to us, and if his voice is like the thunder, sure his ears are as good as his eyes, and he will be sure to answer us. Perhaps you cannot say a word when you pray. Never mind; God does not want to hear; he can tell what you mean even by seeing you. “There, says the Lord, “is a child of mine in prayer. He says not a word; but do you see that tear rolling down his cheek? do you hear that sigh? Oh! mighty God, you can see

both tear and sigh; you can read desire when desire has not clothed itself in words The naked wish God can interpret, he needs us not to light the candle of our desires with language; he can see the candle ere it is lit.

**“He knows the words we mean to speak  
When from our lips they cannot break,**

by reason of the anguish of our spirit. He knows the desire, when words stagger under the weight of it; he knows the wish when language fails to express it. You God see me. Ah, God. when I cannot pray with words, I will throw myself flat on my face, and I will groan my prayer and if I cannot groan it I will sigh it; and if I cannot sigh it I will wish it: and when these eye—strings break, and when death has sealed these lips, I will enter heaven with a prayer, which you will not hear but which you will see—the prayer of my inmost spirit, when my heart and my flesh fail me, that God may be the strength of my life and portion for ever. There is comfort for you, you praying ones, that God sees you. That is enough; if you cannot speak he can see you.

I have given a word for the prayerful; now a word for the careful, Some here are very full of care, and doubts, and anxieties, and fears “Oh! sir, you say, “if you could come to my poor house, you would not wonder that I should feel anxious. I have had to part with much of my little furniture to provide myself with living; I am brought very low; I have not a friend in London; I am alone, alone in the wide world. Stop, stop, sir! you are not alone in the world; there is at least one eye regarding you; there is one hand that is ready to relieve you. Don't give up in despair. If your case be ever so bad, God can see your care, your troubles, and your anxieties. To a good man it is enough to see destitution to relieve it; and for God it is enough to see the distresses of his family at once to supply their wants. If you were lying wounded on the battle—field, if you could not speak, you know right well your comrades who are coming by with an abundance will pick you up, if they do but see you; and that is enough for you. So if you are lying on the battle—field of life, God sees you; let that cheer you: he will relieve for he only needs to look at the woes of his children at once to relieve them. Go on then; hope yet; in night's darkest hour, hope for a brighter morrow. God sees you, whatever you art doing;

**“He knows your cares, your tears, your sighs;  
He shall lift up your head.**

And now a word to the slandered. There are some of us who come in for a very large share of slander. It is very seldom that the slander market is much below par; it usually runs up at a very mighty rate; and there are persons who will take shares to any amount. If men could dispose of railway stock as they can of slander, those who happen to have any scrip here would be rich enough by tomorrow at twelve o'clock. There are some who have a superabundance of that matter; they are continually hearing rumours of this, that, and the other; and there is one fool or another who has not brains enough to write sense, nor honesty sufficient to keep him to the truth, who, therefore, writes the most infamous libels upon some of God's servants, compared with whom he himself is nothing, and whom for very envy he chooses to depreciate. Well, what matters it? Suppose you are slandered; here is a comfort: “You God see me. They say that such—and—such is your motive, but you need not answer them; you can say, “God knows that matter You are charged with such—and—such a thing of which you are innocent; your heart is right concerning the deed, you have never done it: well, you have no need to battle for your reputation; you need only point your finger to the sky, and say, “There is a witness there who will right me at last—there is a Judge of all the earth, whose decision I am content to wait; his answer will be a complete exoneration of me, and I shall come out of the furnace, like gold seven times purified. Young men, are you striving to do good, and do others impute wrong motives to you? Do not be particular about answering them. Just go straight on, and your life will be the best refutation of the calumny. David's brethren said that in his pride and the naughtiness of his heart he had come to see the battle. “Ah! thought David, “I will answer you by—and—bye. Off he went across the plain to fight Goliath; he cut off his head, and then came back to his brethren with a glorious answer in his conquering hand. If any man desires to reply to the false assertions of his enemies, let him go and do good, and he needs not say accord—that will be his answer. I am the subject of detraction, but I can point to hundreds of souls that have been saved on earth by my feeble instrumentality, and my reply to all my enemies is this, “You may say what you like; but seeing these lame men are healed, can you say anything against them? You may find fault with throttle or manner, but God saves souls, and we will hold up that fact, like giant Goliath's head, to show you that although it was nothing but a sling or stone, so much the better, for God has gotten the victory. Go straight on and you will live down your slanderers; and remember when you are most distressed, “You God see me.

Now, a sentence or two to some of you who are ungodly and know not Christ. What shall I say to you but this,—how heinous are your sins when they are put in the light of this doctrine! Remember, sinner, whenever you sinnest, you sinnest in the teeth of God. It is bad enough to steal in darkness, but he is a very thief who steals in daylight. It is vile, it is fearfully vile to commit a sin which I desire to cover, but to do my sin when man is looking at me shows much hardness of heart. Ah! sinner, remember, you sinnest with God's eyes looking on you. How black must be your heart! how awful your sin! for you sinnest in the very face of justice when God's eye is fixed on you. I was looking the other day at a glass bee—hive, and it was very singular to observe the motions of the creatures inside. Well, now, this world is nothing but a huge glass bee—hive. God looks down on you, and he sees you all. You go into your little cells in the streets of this huge city; you go to your business, your pleasure, your devotions, and your sins, but remember, wherever you go, you are like the bees under a great glass shade, you can never get away from God's observation. When children disobey before the eyes of their parents it shows that they are hardened. If they do it behind their parents' back, it proves that there is some shame left. But you, sirs, sin when God is present with you; you sin while God's eyes are searching you through and through. Even now you are thinking hard thoughts of God while God is hearing all those silent utterances of your evil hearts. Does not that render your sin extremely heinous? Therefore. I beseech you, think of it and repent of your wickedness, that

your sins may be blotted out through Jesus Christ.

And one more thought. If God sees you, O sinner, how easy it will be to condemn you. In the late horrible ease of Palmer, witnesses were required, and a jury was empanelled to try the accused. But if the judge could have mounted the bench and have said, "I saw the man, myself, mix the poison; I stood by and saw him administer it, I read his thoughts; I knew for what purpose he did it; I read his heart; I was with him when he first conceived the black design, and I have tracked him in all his evasions, in all those acts by which he sought to blindfold justice; and I can read in his heart that he knows himself to be guilty now, the case then would have been over; the trial would have been little more than a form. What will you think, O sinner, when you art brought before God, and God shall say, "You did so—and—so, and will mention what you did in the darkness of the night when no eye was there? You will start back amazed, and say, "Oh, heavens! how shall God know? is there knowledge in the Most High? He will say, "Stop, sinner; have more to startle you yet; and he will begin to unfold the records of the past: leaf after leaf he will read of the diary he has kept of your existence. Oh! I can see you as he reads page after page, your knees are knocking together, your hair is standing on end, your blood is frozen in your veins, congealed for fright, and you stand like a second Niobe, a rock bedewed with tears. You are thunder struck to find your thoughts read out before the sun, while men and angels hear. You are amazed beyond degree to hear your imaginations read, to see your deeds photographed on the great white throne, and to hear a voice saying, "Rebellion at such a time; uncleanness at such a time; evil thoughts at such an hour. Sabbath breaking on such a day; blasphemy at such a time; theft at such an hour; hard thoughts of God at such a period; rejection of his grace on such a day, stiflings of conscience at another time; and so on to the end of the chapter, and then the awful final doom. "Sinner, depart accursed! I saw you sin; it needs no witnesses; I heard your oath; I heard your blasphemy; I saw your theft; I read your thought. Depart! depart! I am clear when I judge you; I am justified when I condemn you: for you have done this evil in my sight.

Lastly, you ask me what you must do to be saved; and I will never let a congregation go, I hope, till I have told them that. Hear, then, in a few words, the way of salvation. It is this. Christ said to the Apostles, "Preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and his baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. Or, to give you Paul's version, when he spoke to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. You askest what you art to believe. Why, this: that Christ died and rose again; that by his death he did bear the punishment of all believers; and that by his resurrection he did wipe out the faults of all his children. And if God give you faith, you will believe that Christ died for you; and will be washed in his blood, and you will trust his mercy and his love to be your everlasting redemption when the world shall end.

## **Genesis 16:7-16**

### **The God Who Sees**

**by Steven Cole**

Dr. James Boice tells a poignant story about an incident from his childhood. In the closing days of World War II, when Boice was seven, his father was in the Air Force, stationed in Louisiana, with the family. Many servicemen were being discharged, but since there was the risk that discharge orders could be canceled if a man didn't leave immediately after receiving them, Boice's family had begun to pack. When the orders came, school was in session, so James was told that the family would leave as soon as he got home that afternoon. He was so excited he could hardly wait. He jumped off the school bus, ran up the steps to his house, and found that the door was locked. Surprised and a bit subdued, he ran around to the back door and found that it was locked too. At last he found a window he knew would be unlocked, pried it open and crawled through. To his shock, the room was empty. So was the entire house. As this seven-year-old boy made his way slowly from room to room, he got the sinking sensation that in the rush of packing and leaving quickly before the orders were canceled, his family had forgotten and left him behind. Actually his parents had gone off on a last minute errand and were waiting outside in the car for him to come home from school while he was inside wandering through the empty house. But it was a sad little boy they saw backing out of the window after his tour of the abandoned house. (Boice, Genesis [Zondervan] 1:295-296.)

It's terrible to feel abandoned by your parents. It's also tough to feel abandoned by God. Most of us have felt that way at one time or another. Maybe things were going well and suddenly the bottom dropped out of your life. In the confusion of the events, you wondered, "Where is God in all this?"

That's how Hagar must have felt when she fled from Sarai. Things had seemed to look up for a brief moment. Her lowly status as a servant had changed when Abram, according to the custom of the day, had taken her to produce a child on behalf of the barren Sarai. But when Hagar became pregnant, she communicated an air of superiority toward Sarai, who then mistreated her. Finally, things got so bad that Hagar took off in the direction of her homeland, out through the desert. It was a dangerous thing for a woman to do. She could have been abused or taken captive by nomadic traders. Being pregnant, she could have lost her baby from the rigors of traveling in that rugged terrain. Having had to escape, probably in the night, she would have had few supplies. But somehow she made it to a spring of water in the desert and sat down exhausted.



Hagar knew about Abram's God, the living and true God. She must have wondered if that God knew or cared about her situation. No doubt she was confused. What could a pregnant, single woman do, even if she reached her homeland? If she had family there, they would have been too poor to help her. Her future was uncertain, her past too painful to think about. She felt abandoned by everyone on earth and forgotten by God in heaven.

It's in that context that we read, "Now the angel of the Lord found her" (Ge 16:7). What a beautiful picture of our compassionate God, who is concerned even for this poor, confused servant girl! The angel tells her what to do and then promises that he will multiply her descendants through the child she is carrying. Hagar, encouraged and awed by this experience, gives a new name to God-- "El Roi," "the God who sees." She then returns to Abram and Sarai and Ishmael is born.

There are two dominant themes in these verses:

First, God sees Hagar (Ge 16:7-12); and  
second, Hagar sees God (Ge 16:13-16).

God saw Hagar's affliction; as a result, Hagar saw God's mercy and submitted to Him. Applying it to us, we can put it: Because God sees our affliction, we can see His mercy and submit to Him. This story is encouraging if you are suffering and feel that God has abandoned you. He has not forgotten; He sees your affliction. Because He sees, you can see His mercy, and submit to Him.

### 1. God sees our affliction (Ge 16:7-12)

God saw Hagar's affliction: "The angel of the Lord found her ...." Isn't that great! The Good Shepherd went looking for her. God is a seeking God! We may think that we found Him, but the reality is, He found us. We were lost and confused, wandering away from Him. He came looking and found us! If you know Christ as Savior, you realize that you didn't think, "I need a little help in my life. I'll decide to let Jesus be my Savior." The Son of Man did not come to seek and to save those who needed a little help. He came to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10)! It is our sinful pride that keeps us from seeing our true condition: We are lost! We must own up to that fact. But the good news is, no one, not even a lowly Egyptian servant girl, is too lost in God's sight. The angel of the Lord found Hagar!

Who is this angel of the Lord? There is debate among scholars, but I believe that it is the Lord Jesus Christ in a pre-incarnate appearance. In Ge 16:13 it is stated that it was the Lord who spoke to Hagar. (See also, Ge. 18:1-2, 17, 22, 27, 33, 19:1; 22:11-12; 24:7; 31:11, 13; 48:15-16. -- See **Angel of the LORD**) So Hagar was found by and was speaking to the Lord Jesus Christ! Hagar could flee from the presence of Sarai, but she couldn't flee from the presence of the Lord. You can try to run from difficult circumstances, but you can't hide from the God who put you there. Notice the irony of verse 8: The Lord knows Hagar's name and her station in life, yet He asks her where she has come from and where she is going. Wherever in the Bible you find God asking a question, you can assume that He is not looking for information. He wants the person to think about the situation. The Lord wanted Hagar to think about two things: Where have you come from? and, Where are you going? She had come from being Sarai's maid. As such, she was not free to flee from her duty. Where was she going? She really didn't know. But, clearly, she wasn't seeking after the Lord and His will.

Those are good questions to ask yourself when you're in a difficult situation: Where have you come from? Did God allow that trial for some reason? Where are you going? Did you seek His permission to run? Our real need in a bad situation is not to escape, but to seek and to submit to the Lord. The Lord has some bad news and some good news for Hagar, and for us, at such times. First, the bad news: Hagar needed to go back and submit to Sarai. The good news: then God would bless her.

#### A. The "bad" news: our need in affliction is to submit to God.

We don't like to hear that. We sputter, "But, Lord, don't you know how I've been mistreated? Don't you know how bad it is? Give me the blessing first, then I'll submit." But God's way is, submit first; then He blesses. Obedience always comes before blessing. **Submit** is a dirty word in our day. We Americans have a history of not submitting to anyone who oppresses us. Our country was founded because the settlers said, "The king can't do that to us! We'll revolt!" If we're treated unfairly or harshly, we stand up for our rights. The very word, "submit," makes us mad. We don't like it. But the Lord, who made us and who knows our real need, says, "Your number one need in a time of trial is to learn to submit to Me. And you don't learn to submit to Me by running from the situation." Ouch! Can't you feel yourself wanting to fight? Don't you want to cry out, "But, God, You don't understand!?" But He does understand. He says to Hagar, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority."

The book of First Peter is about submission to authority in a time of trial. The Christians to whom Peter wrote were suffering, some as slaves under harsh masters, some as wives under disobedient husbands, all as citizens under an unjust government. Peter's word to each group of victims was, "Submit" (1 Pet. 2:13, 18; 3:1). He sums it up, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Your number one need in a time of trial is to submit to God- humble yourself under His mighty hand. He is in control of the circumstances. He cares for you; don't doubt His love. There are lessons which our rebellious nature cannot learn except by submitting to God in trials, even when we're being treated wrongly or unfairly.

Some people never grow in the Lord because they have a habit of running from difficult situations where He has put them for their training. They had problems with their parents as teenagers, so they rebelled. They get a job and have problems, so they quit. They get married and have conflict, so they walk away from it. They seek counseling, but they don't like what the counselor tells them, so they either quit or else look for a counselor who agrees with them. They join a church, but can't get along with the people or don't like something, so they find another church. But guess what? They discover that the new church has the same problems.

At some point they need to realize that they're carrying their own baggage with them. As Pogo said, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." The problem is, they've never learned to submit to God and to allow Him to use the authority structures He has ordained to sandpaper off their rough edges. God sees our need in our affliction: To submit to Him in the difficult situations where He has sovereignly placed us.

While that's a difficult word, it's also a merciful word. As I said, Hagar may have suffered greatly or even perished if she had continued her flight into the wilderness. God often mercifully checks us in our disobedience to prevent us from even greater damage. The way of obedience is hard, but the way of disobedience is even more difficult. It was better for Hagar to be associated with Abram and Sarai, even with Sarai's harshness, than with her native Egyptians, who worshiped false gods. It's better for you to be in a local church, with all the imperfect people and their faults, than to be in the world, where God is not known.

Some of you may be in trying situations right now, but you haven't submitted to God. Maybe your pattern has been to run from one difficult situation to the next, always blaming others or complaining about bad luck, but never humbling yourself under God's mighty hand. You won't know His blessing until submit to Him in whatever circumstances He has placed you. It's hard news, but it's not really bad.

## **B. The good news: When we submit to God in our affliction, He will bless us and our descendants.**

The Lord says that He heard Hagar's affliction, not her prayer (Ge 16:11). Whether Hagar was calling out to the Lord or not, we don't know. But the Lord graciously hears our affliction, even when we fail to call out to Him as we should. But He not only hears and sees our affliction, He sees the future after our affliction is over. The Lord goes on to tell Hagar how He will greatly multiply her descendants. Concerning the son in her womb, the Lord tells her to name him Ishmael, which means "God hears," because the Lord heard her affliction. Every time she called her son's name, Hagar would be reminded of God's faithfulness, that He had heard her affliction.

God reveals that Ishmael will be a wild donkey of a man, meaning, a strong, independent, untamed man. He will be a fighter, whose hand will be against everyone. In the last line of verse 12, the word means both "to the east of" and "over against." Both were true; Ishmael's Arab descendants both lived to the east of and were over against (in opposition to) Isaac's descendants. There is a divine mystery here: God sovereignly chose Isaac and his line through Jacob while He set Ishmael and his descendants against His chosen people. And yet Ishmael and his race were responsible for their sin and rebellion against God. All we can say is, "How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (Rom. 11:33). But it was enough for Hagar to know that her son would not, like her, be enslaved, and that he would prosper. Thus it was a word of hope to her.

There's an application here for us: God allows U-turns in the desert! Even though we've run from God, if we will turn around and submit to Him in our trials, His blessing will be on us and our descendants. We can be assured that He will work out His sovereign plan for us and for our children if we will make a U-turn and submit to Him.

So the first great theme in these verses is that God saw Hagar. But Hagar also saw God. When she realized that God had seen her, she responded by acknowledging that she had seen God and she named both the Lord and the spring after her experience. Then she returned to Abram and Sarai in submission to the Lord. Even so, when we realize that God sees us in our affliction, we will gain a fresh glimpse of God.

## **2. We see God in His mercy and submit to Him (Ge 16:13-16).**

Hagar wouldn't have seen the Lord if it hadn't been for her trial. God often uses trials to open us up to some fresh vision of Him which we would have missed if we hadn't been in the difficult situation. "Hagar called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, 'You are a God who sees'" (Ge 16:13). God sees! Not only does God see, but even better, God sees me, and in spite of my confusion and rebellion, He lets me get a glimpse of Him!

Scholars disagree about how to interpret the Hebrew of the last sentence of Ge 16:13. It literally reads, "I have seen here after the One who saw me." The expression is almost identical to Exodus 33:23, where God tells Moses that he will see His back, but not His

face, for no one can see His face and live. So the meaning may be, "I have caught a glimpse of God." But since there is the motif in the Old Testament that no one can see God and live, because His glory and holiness are too awesome, some understand Hagar to be marveling that she has actually seen God and is still alive. (The NASB takes this interpretation.) The well was called "Beer-la-hairoi," which means either, "the well of the Living One who sees me," or, as the scholarly C. F. Keil argues, "the well of the seeing alive," since Hagar saw God and remained alive. The idea is, Hagar saw the God who saw her need and was merciful to her in spite of her sin. In our trials, ...

#### **A. We see God who is merciful in spite of our sin.**

When God meets you in a time of trial, as He did with Hagar, and you see Him, your first thought is, "Oh, God, how can You be so merciful to me, a sinner? I'm in this mess because of my own rebellion and sin, and yet You didn't strike me down or let me go. You directed me in the way I need to go and promised me Your blessing if I will do it. Thank You, Lord!" You gain a fresh glimpse of the mercy of God. When that happens, it becomes a source of testimony to others. They named the well with this unusual name, Beer-la-hai-roi: "The well of the Living One who sees me," or, "the well of the seeing alive." When travelers asked, "How did this place ever get this name?" the story would be told again, how God met Hagar there in her time of need, told her what to do and promised His blessing. In the same way, when God has met you in your trial and you've seen Him in a fresh way, use it to tell others of His great mercy.

#### **B. God's mercy moves us to submit to Him.**

"The kindness of God leads you to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). Hagar submitted to God by returning to Abram and Sarai. Submission is the proper response when we see God and His mercy toward us in Christ. The text says that Abram (not Hagar) called the name of his son Ishmael. That means that Hagar told Abram of her meeting with God and of God's command to name the boy "God hears." That was a gentle rebuke to Abram, who had taken Hagar as his wife because he was beginning to wonder if God did, in fact, hear. He was trying to help God out.

But in our affliction, when it seems that God has forgotten us and that He isn't hearing our prayers, we need to learn to submit to Him, not resort to our human schemes. We need to go back and put ourselves under the authority structures God has ordained for our benefit. If you're a teenager, you need to submit to your parents. If you're married, you need to commit yourself to your partner, in spite of the difficulties. If you're hopping from church to church, disgruntled with each one because of the impossible people who have wronged you, you need to commit yourself to a church where Christ is honored and His Word is preached. Stick it out and work through the problems in a spirit of submission to the leadership God has placed in that church, even though they aren't perfect. As one wag said, "If you ever find a perfect church, don't join it. You'll spoil it!"

#### **Conclusion**

Dr. James Dobson tells of a time when he watched his daughter's pet hamster trying to gnaw its way out of its cage to what, no doubt, looked to the hamster like freedom. But Dobson saw what the hamster did not: the family's pet dog, watching expectantly from a few feet away. If the hamster had worked its way free, it would have met sudden death. The cage was really its protection and blessing.

We're often like that pet hamster. We try to break free from some confinement or trial that God has put us in, thinking that then we could really live. But God sees that our real need is to submit to Him in the trial. We need to realize that even as God saw Hagar, He sees us. He especially sees our affliction. If in our trials

we will look, like Hagar, we will see God in His mercy toward us. Our response will be to submit ourselves to His loving purpose. The French writer, Paul Claudel, wrote, "Christ did not come to do away with suffering; He did not come to explain it; He came to fill it with His presence." I pray that if you're suffering, you'll see the God who sees you.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Is every trial from God or can trials come from Satan?

Does it make any difference with regard to our response?

2. Is it always God's will for a Christian in a difficult trial to submit? Does submission mean not seeking a way out? When can we rightly seek a way out (e.g., of a difficult job)?

3. Is it ever right for Christians to stand up for their rights, to rebel against their government, or to fight for the abolition of unjust social institutions, such as slavery? When? How?

4. Is God endorsing slavery by making Hagar go back and submit to Sarai? Was God being unfair to her?

## [The God Who Sees](#)

### HAGAR AT THE FOUNTAIN

Genesis 16:13, 14.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 8TH, 1885, BY  
C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi.”—Genesis 16:13, 14.

YOU know the story of Hagar. I am not going to deal with the allegorical meaning of it: that would be apart from our subject this morning. I shall speak of the incident simply as it stands, and even then I shall not use it strictly as a case of sure conversion, for I am not certain that it was such. I suppose Hagar to have been an Egyptian woman, probably one of the maid-servants who were given by the King of Egypt to Abram at that unhappy time when Abram's faith failed him, and he went down into Egypt, and requested Sarai to conceal the fact that she was his wife. **Sin, whenever it is committed by the child of God, is sure to involve him in sorrow. In the long run, the result of any false dealing comes home to the believer; and it does so in very unexpected ways.**

Hagar became the special maid of Sarai. God had promised to Abram that he should have a son, and that thus he should be the father of nations: that blessing did not appear likely to come to him for there were no children born to Sarai, nor did there seem to be the possibility of any. Husband and wife were both old and well stricken in years. No special mention had been made of Sarai in the promise as it then stood; and therefore it was not clear to Abram but what some other might be the mother of the expected seed; and when, in her unbelief, Sarai proposed that her maid should become his secondary wife, Abram hearkened to her. According to the custom of the times, and of oriental nations, this act was right enough; but as it was not really right in itself, and showed littleness of faith on Abram's part, sorrow soon came of it. Hagar began to behave herself proudly towards her mistress, and her mistress finding herself despised, complained to Abram, and began also to behave harshly towards her. The wrong element would not work in Abram's family; it might do very well for the Canaanites around him; but in a house where God was feared, it was an evil principle, and could not work for peace or holiness. Hagar's high Egyptian spirit, finding herself likely to be famous in the house, would not brook the rule of her mistress, nor could Sarai, the quiet, but queenly matron, put up with the insults of her slave. The mistress became hard and harsh to her handmaid. Wrought into a frenzy, Hagar flies from the tent, and makes the best of her way on the road to Egypt, whence she originally came. But what could a lone woman do in her condition, all alone in the wilderness?

Wearied with her journey, she spies a fountain, and she sits there. It was the likeliest place for any passing traveller to find her, and she sits her down there in her proud despair. Perhaps they will send for her; Abram may repent his yielding to Sarai, and send for her; she will wait there; and if nothing comes to her help, she will die rather than return. She does not appear at that time to have lifted up her heart in prayer to God. She had lived in a godly household; but possibly, as she thought herself ill-treated, she had conceived a dislike towards the God of her mistress; such harsh treatment as she had received was not likely to incline her towards the religion of those from whom she had fled: she was godless and hopeless. Do you not see her crouching at the fountain, half mad with pride and vexation, and at the same time stricken with a sullen despair? She knows not what she is to do, neither does any way of hope open before her. Alas, poor Hagar!

But although there was no prayer of hers for God to hear, another voice spake in his ear. The angel who suddenly appeared to her said, “The Lord hath heard thy affliction.” That is a very beautiful sentence. Thou hast not prayed: thou hast been wilful, reckless, and at last despairing, and therefore thou hast not cried unto the Lord. But thy deep sorrow has cried to him. Thou art oppressed, and the Lord has undertaken for thee. Thou art suffering heavily, and God, the All-pitiful, has heard thy affliction. Grief has an eloquent voice when mercy is the listener. Woe has a plea which goodness cannot resist. Though sorrow and woe ought to be attended with prayer, yet even when supplication is not offered, the heart of God is moved by misery itself. In Hagar's case, the Lord heard her affliction: he looked forth from his glory upon that lone Egyptian woman who was in the deepest distress in which a woman could well be placed, and he came speedily to her help.

We have not much difficulty in deciding who the angel was that appeared to her. We are sure that this Angel of the Lord was that great messenger of the covenant who was afterwards to appear in actual flesh and blood, but who many a time before he was born at Bethlehem anticipated his descent to earth, and visited it in human form. His delights were ever with the sons of men; and so when there was a message to be brought to men, that blessed One, the Second Person of the divine Unity condescended to be the bearer of it. In the present instance I discern foreshadowings of the Son of man; I perceive sure traces of the Christ who in a later age would dwell among mankind. Read a little before the text, and you will find it written, The angel of the Lord "found her"; it is the deed of the good Shepherd to find a lost sheep. I see before me that Son of man who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Surely this is that great Shepherd of the sheep who goeth after his sheep until he find it! He had come far into the waste after her, and he rested not until he found her. Great gladness filled his heart, as when a merchantman findeth a pearl of great price. I see high joy in the countenance of this angel of Jehovah. We read in verse seven, "The angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water." Significant place! Can you forget how, when that blessed One was here in flesh and blood, he found another woman at the well. "Jesus being wearied, sat thus on the well. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." Does not this story of Hagar read like a rehearsal of that Samaritan incident? "He found her by a fountain of water."

This fountain is further said to be "in the wilderness." Note that. Remember those words of his when he actually became incarnate: "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?" Again we read, "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness." This wonderful appearance of the Christ before he actually assumed our flesh, has a likeness to his actual incarnation of the most delightful kind. 'Tis he; we are sure it is he. All the tones of the voice and the modes of the speech are his. That this angel of the Lord was God we also know, for our text says, "She called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." The all-seeing God had veiled himself in that angelic form. That Divine One, whom we adore as the Son of God and the Son of man, condescended to be the messenger of mercy to a poor slave-woman, who had run away from her mistress. None but God would thus have condescended. The world had no pity in those days for slaves of any kind, much less for those who had left their master's house. Here the Lord of love found a noble opportunity for revealing his gracious nature to a forlorn one. No eye pitied her, and no hand brought her deliverance "Now will I arise, saith the Lord." The angel found her, and it is of that finding, and of what came of it, that I am going to speak this morning. May the Holy Spirit cause the word to be with power.

**I. In speaking of Hagar, I shall first dwell for a little upon HER REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE.** I pray that to some daughter of sorrow the like experience may come. May your case be mirrored in that of Hagar, as when one seeth his face in a looking-glass.

Observe that Hagar had outlawed herself. No doubt she had much to put up with; but she had been insolent and provoking to her mistress, and at last she had in her impatience deliberately quitted the house of Abraham, and left the abode of the chosen family. Whatever that house may have been, it was the best place then upon the earth; it was almost the only spot under heaven where the Lord God was known. You might have said of Abraham's family, "Ye are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." She, an Egyptian, once benighted by the superstitious worship of her country, had enjoyed the light of the knowledge of the true God for a while; and now she had turned her back on it. She could not but have marked Abraham's high character and sincere devotion. She must have seen his true and real faith in God, and the way in which he endeavoured to order his household aright. Whatever faults she may have perceived there, whatever errors she may have suffered from, she could not but have noticed that there was a great difference between Abraham's tent and the abodes of Egypt. Now she quits her place of privilege, she renounces the high hopes which surrounded her, and in her fierce passion she rushes she cares not whither. The untamable spirit which afterwards showed itself in her son Ishmael raged in her bosom. So, too, have we met with those who have deliberately left the ways of God and the people of God, and all semblance of goodness, because they have thought themselves badly used. They have happened to suffer somewhat, and in the bitterness of their spirit they have resolved to stand no more of it. They vow that they will have nothing to do with God, or with his people; they will turn their backs upon everything that is religious, and they will mix with the world in its most ungodly form. They do not, indeed, care what becomes of them: they would flee from the presence of God himself if they could. Friends, relatives, good men, and the circle of blessing they would quit, and roam in a wilderness, hoping to be forgotten. Now their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them, and in their high spirit they are prepared to defy the universe to subdue them.

While she was there, in the moment of her desperation, she was found by the angel. He had come on purpose to seek her out and find her, and he had not failed in his search, as, indeed, he never does. This was the last thing she thought of. She may have hoped to have been found by some merchants going towards Egypt, or to be picked up by certain of the wandering gipsies of the wilderness, but she had not thought that God himself would come after her. What was there about her that Jehovah should come out of his place to seek her? Yet he came in unexpected grace, as he is wont to do. He remembered the low estate of his handmaiden, and because his mercy endureth for ever, he found her by the fountain in the wilderness.

When the angel of the Lord found Hagar, he dealt graciously with her. Indeed this was the object of his finding her; he came in pity, not in wrath. His first act was to awaken conviction within her. He said to her, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and

whither wilt thou go?" This language is singularly like the Lord Jesus Christ's mode of address. The name of the person is mentioned. This forcibly brings to my mind the speech of Our Lord when he said unto the woman, "Mary"; and she turned herself, and said unto him, "Rabboni." He says, "Hagar, Sarai's maid": his word is a personal word, and she cannot mistake it. Is not this the Lord's way in other cases? Has he not said, "I have called thee by thy name"? He adds her description, and reminds her that whatever else she might be, she was "Sarai's maid." How surprised she must have been! She had never seen the august personage before, but evidently he had seen her before, and knew all about her, for his words searched her through and through.

Then, further to bring her to her right senses, the angel asks her, with touching pathos of tone,—“Whence earnest thou?” What hast thou left behind thee? What hast thou given up? All thy hopes lie in Abraham's tent, and thou hast left the place. For thee there is a high destiny, and thou art flying from it. Thou art, after all, a favoured woman, and thou knowest it not; thou art flying away from that which will be thy blessedness! This is the question of the Holy Spirit to every runaway rebel. O wandering sinner, what art thou quitting? In fleeing from goodness, and God, and hope, and grace, dost thou know what thou art leaving?

Again, he asks her, “Whither wilt thou go?” Her crouching form is before him; she lifts up her eyes, all red with tears, and she weeps anew as he says, “And whither wilt thou go?” “Will thou go into the wilderness further, and die there of thirst and hunger? Wilt thou go down into Egypt, back to all the cruelties of that benighted land? Whither wilt thou go?” It is thus the Lord meets runaway sinners that are bent upon their own destruction, and he calls to them by name, and says, “Whence earnest thou? What art thou leaving? What art thou losing? What art thou rejecting? What art thou turning thy back upon? And whither wilt thou go? What can be the end of such a life as thine? Whither can it carry thee but to destruction? Whither wilt thou go by this course of desperate sin? Canst thou face the Eternal, and the judgment-seat, and the curse that withers the ungodly? Whence earnest thou? and whither wilt thou go?” It is thus, I say, that the covenant Angel met with many of us, when he aroused our consciences and made us pause in our headlong rush of sin. Some of us heard the warning voice long years ago, and we can never forget it: the call rings in the chambers of our memory even now. It is thus that the Lord met with some of you a short time since; and you are at this moment filled with gratitude for the interposition. I believe that this morning the Lord will thus meet with some who are in this congregation, whom I know not, but whom he knows right well; for his eye is resting on them now, and his voice is speaking to them through my voice. Like as he said of old, “Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence earnest thou? and whither wilt thou go?” so doth he speak at this hour, and ask you why you are bent upon destroying your own souls.

This wrought in her mind conviction, after a certain sort; and where the Son of God spiritually speaks to the heart, a deep and piercing conviction is felt: his word lays sin bare and open, and makes the guilty conscience feel that nothing is hidden from God, but that all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. As when the butcher hangs up the body of a beast, and with a stroke lays bare the heart and inwards of the creature, so with a single word the Angel of the covenant reveals the heart of Hagar. Thus also the convincing Spirit deals with the sinner, and lays him bare even to the backbone, till all the secrets of his soul are revealed, and he cries, “Thou God seest me.” The Word of the Lord, by revealing the thoughts and intents of the heart, proves its own divine origin to him who feels its operation, and thus God himself is made known as speaking by the Word.

When he had thus wrought conviction in her, the angel who had found Hagar next gave her an exhortation. He said to her, “Return unto thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.” A hard message, as it seemed to her in her pride, no doubt. “Return,” however hard the way; “Submit thyself,” however humiliating the deed. Hagar is not spared; the angel puts his words very plainly. If it were kindness to say, “Return,” it is still greater kindness to say severely, but truthfully, “Return to thy mistress.” Mark, not to thy master only, but “to thy mistress.” He says also, “Submit thyself under her hands,” to show that the submission must be entire and absolute. Put thyself back into thy right place, and then grace can deal with thee. When the covenant Angel deals with any man or woman among us, he will say, “Return, return, return. Repent, and be converted. Turn ye; turn ye, why will ye die?” The gospel does not spare the sinner the pangs of repentance. It calls him to sorrow after a godly sort. You must abhor your sin, and flee from it, or your sin will be your ruin. You must so repent of your sin as to make such restitution as may be possible. You must replace stolen goods, and recall false words. You must humble yourself wherein you have been insolent; you must bow yourself down before God, and submit to man also, so far as you have wronged him. God the Holy Spirit, when he deals with a proud, unrighteous heart, lays justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and sweeps away as with hail every refuge of lies. He cries, “Return! Submit!” and puts the matter so closely home that there is no misunderstanding it. He bids the man confess, and forsake his sin; and gives him no hope of mercy, unless he will do so. God has not met with you, friend, if you go on in your sin. God in mercy has not met with you if sin remains sweet to you, and repentance is unknown to your heart. You must go back to the place from whence you came, and you must submit yourself, or nothing will go right with you.

When the angel of the Lord had thus spoken with Hagar, calling her by her name, and working conviction in her heart, and pointing out her duty, he then added rich promises—promises which to her mind must have been very unexpected and consoling. She was a runaway slave girl, but he says to her, “I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude, and thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael.” That name signifies, “God heareth me,” because the Lord had heard her affliction. The angel went on to tell her what this child should be who would be the joy of her heart. Little does a sinner know what blessings are in store for him, if he repents and submits to the Lord's will. He is come to the borders of the wilderness of death, but

God intends to bring him back to peace, and joy, and happiness. Oh, did the proud sinner know what God's grace will do for him, he would break his heart to think he had been so rebellious! Oh, did the obstinate know what a place there is at the Father's board and in the Father's heart for the returning prodigal, and how much he is still beloved, notwithstanding all his naughtiness, he would quicken his footsteps, and wish to have wings upon his heels, that he might fly back to his Father's house and his Father's bosom! O soul, I do pray that Jesus Christ may find thee out this morning, and say to thee, "Return unto me, for I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thine iniquities. Return unto me, for I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

So you see, Hagar's experience was a very remarkable one, although by no means peculiar to herself. Blessed be God, it has happened to tens of thousands, that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, When they have run away, and outlawed themselves, grace has followed them, grace has convicted them, grace has admonished them, and grace has made large promises to them. Their proud heart has yielded, and their spirit has become gentle as that of a little child, as Hagar's spirit was, and they have returned to the great Father's house, and submitted themselves, and rich blessings have become theirs. Is it not written, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land"? Though Hagar had banished herself away from the house of divine favour, yet the Lord devised means for restoring her, and she was restored. Thus much on her remarkable experience.

## **II. Now, I want you to notice HER DEVOUT ACKNOWLEDGMENT.**

When that which we have described happened to her, she acknowledged the living God. My text says, "She called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." She spake to him that spake to her: after this fashion do we all begin our communion with God. Oh, when God speaks to you, you will soon find a tongue to speak to him. I do not mean when I speak to you in his name; for what am I? You ought to hear us if we truly speak for God, since it is of his kindness that he sends his servants to speak to you: but if the covenant Angel comes himself, and if he speaks to the heart, then he unstops the deaf ear, and looses the dumb tongue. Men soon speak to Christ when Christ speaks to them. Did you but know the power of the Almighty word of grace, you would understand that as darkness gave place to light when he said, "Let there be light," so do men's hearts quit their sin when Jesus speaks to them in tones of effectual grace. Hagar knew no speaking to God till God spake with her; but after he had spoken to her there was no silence.

What did she say? She acknowledged him to be God. "She called the name of the Lord that spake to her, Thou God seest me." It is one thing to believe there is a God, but it is quite another thing to know it by coming into personal contact with him. They give you books to prove that there is a God—all well and good; be convinced by them. They tell you to walk abroad and see God in his works. Do so. You cannot better employ yourselves; for God is everywhere. His breath perfumes the flowers, and his pencil paints them. But you will not learn God in this fashion, if you use this method by itself. To go from nature up to nature's God is a long step for broken legs: we are so mangled by our fall that we never take that step without divine help. But, oh, if the Lord meets with you! If he reveals his own self to your heart! What assurance! What certainty! Think not I am talking now of things that are not: I speak what I have myself felt. God has met with some of us as surely as ever one spirit has met with another. Men have so spoken to us at times, that we can never forget their speech; but never has human voice come with such force as that of the Lord of hosts, the accents of whose words we shall hear as long as memory holds her place and reason sits on her throne. We may forget the word of father, mother, wife, or friend, but not the voice of the God of love. "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." None doubt the existence of God when God has come into contact with their spirit. When we have felt his power and tasted his love, and known his overwhelming influence, then have we said, "Jehovah, he is the God," and we have bowed in solemn worship before him. I do not know that Hagar had ever thought of God before; but she discerns him now and speaks wisely. No doubt she had heard of Jehovah, for she had joined in the devotions of Abraham's family; but now for the first time in her life she recognizes in deed and of a truth that the Lord lives for her, and therefore she speaks to him, and calls him, "The God that sees."

Observe, dear friends, that she acknowledged his observant love. She could not help acknowledging it, for it flashed before her eyes. I do not think when she said, "Thou God seest me," that she meant merely that God is omniscient and therefore that he saw her; but she meant this, "Thou seest me, with a special observation. Thou seest me with eyes of tender concern and loving care. Thou knowest me in my adversity." She felt in her inmost soul that eyes of thoughtful love were fixed on her. "Hagar, Sarai's maid," knew that she was specially under watchful care. Those holy eyes had noticed all her sin, which had been brought to her remembrance; those eyes had seen her duty, which she was now willing to resume; those eyes had spied out the promise for her, which promise had brought a warm comfort to her poor, chill spirit. "Oh," said she, "what a God thou art—the God who sees, who knows, who considers, and thinks of me!" Now she has a God, not in theory, but in fact. You that only know God as one who made the heavens and earth, do not indeed know him at all. He must be personally a God to you, or he will not be your God at all. To us the true God is the God who seeth us. Doth not his law begin, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"? His special care is the mark by which we know him. It was so in Hagar's case; God's watchful care towards her made him real to her. She knew that he must be God; she could not doubt it, for she had been so strangely found

out by him. In the extremity of her lost estate, when she had gone to the uttermost of sin and sorrow, he had found her out, and so she calls him, "the God that sees me."

In the presence of that God she felt overpowered and reads to yield. She was so overwhelmed, that no rebellion remained within her. She girds her garments about her, and she makes the best of her way home to the tent of Sarai. Her mistress is hard; but sin is harder. She will go back and bear the reproach and rebuke, for she has a promise hidden in her heart to sustain her; she shall yet be the glad mother of a father of nations who shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. She returns surrounded with God. Bathed in the sense of the divine oversight, she resigns herself to her work. Though Abram should not encourage her, and Sarai should not acknowledge her, yet the Lord's eye would be upon her, and God's favour was preparing great things for her. Her heart was light within her, because of the divine favour, and in that spirit she was subdued unto the will of God. That is what I want to happen to many a poor soul this morning in a still fuller and more spiritual sense. Pray, you people of God, that it may be so. If you are here this morning, Mistress Sarah, let me put in a gentle word for your poor maid. If she does come back to you, do not treat her harshly again; do not drive her away again; but receive the runaway and make the best of her. Let the past be buried. Say, "If an angel has appeared to thee, and taught thee to know the Lord, I will gladly receive thee, and show the kindness of God unto thee."

**III. Let me now call to your notice THE MANIFEST AMAZEMENT of this woman;** for in her glad surprise she uttered a sentence which runs as follows: "Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" "This is a sentence very hard to be understood; not because it is hard to make out a meaning, but because it is so full of meaning. It reads like an oracle. Expositors will tell you that as many senses may be given to this sentence as there are words in it; and each one of these senses will bear a measure of decent defence. I shall not go into them all, but I think I see clearly that she was amazed that God should care for her. "Thou God seest me. Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" "Does he see me? Do I see him? If I had loved God when I was in Sarai's tent, I could have understood his following me here; if I had sought him when I was with Abram, and had known my master's God in Canaan, I could have understood that he should remember me now: but I was a wild Egyptian; I would not bow my knee to Jehovah; no, I had no wish nor thought for the living God; yet hath he looked after me, the slave girl, for whom nobody cared! He hath spoken to me concerning things to come." Brethren, it is a great wonder to me this day that ever my God should think of me. Brothers, sisters, do you not share that feeling, each one for yourself? Do you not say, "Why me, my Lord? Why me"? Sit still in holy wonder, and adore and bless the Lord.

I think her next amazement was that she should have been such a long time without ever thinking of him who had thought so much of her. She says, "Have I also here looked unto him that seeth me?" "What! Have I been these years with Abraham, and heard about the God who has been looking at me in love, and have I never glanced a thought to him?" Her ungodliness astounds her. Brother, when you are brought to God it will strike you as though a dart went through your flesh, that you should so long have done despite to God and heavenly things. Then will you say, "Have I forgotten Christ? Have I forgotten God? Has he had designs of love to me, and purposes of grace for me, and yet have I rebelled against him? Did he die for me, and did I refuse to live for him? Did he bleed his life away on the cross for me, and have I been all these years thoughtless and careless of him?" It will stagger you; you will feel ready to sink into the dust when you once feel the folly and meanness of your course. You can bluster, you can be proud and careless, when you know not God; but when you once fully meet with him, you will be ready to bite your tongues to think you could have lived so long in ignorance and neglect of your God. Hagar was evidently startled as she remembered that she had never up till that time looked to the observing One.

But next, she is amazed still more to think that at last she does look unto God. In effect she cries, "What! Has it come to this? Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? Is Hagar at last converted? When I had bread to eat I never looked after God, and now that I have come into this wilderness, do I seek and find him? No creature can hear my call, and do I now call upon my Creator? I am alone, alone, alone; there is nothing here but this well, and lo I the angel of Jehovah has found me and spoken with me, and now in this wild place I for the first time look after the Lord who has looked after me. Is this the place, the spot of ground, where I must needs close in with my Maker and know that there is a God, and believe his promise, and begin to live in expectation of its fulfilment?" It might well astound her. Perhaps somebody has come into this service this very day, almost driven to desperation: you have acted so wrongly—I cannot tell how wrongly—and now you are smarting from the consequences of your foolishness. If God is meeting with you this morning you will cry out in astonishment, "What! Have I come hither to find God? Have I come into this miserable condition that I might be driven to look after him? This is surprising grace!" An old man in the country was a gracious father, and brought up his children in the fear of the Lord; but his son while yet a youth must needs see life in London, and therefore he came to the great city, and plunged into all sorts of sin. He cared nothing for the Sabbath, but even felt glad to escape from the weariness of the meeting-house to which he had been taken from his infancy. It was no design of his ever to find God, but God found him in the most unlikely of all the places in the world, namely, in a low play-house. A scene occurred in which a mutinous sailor was to be hanged, and asking for a glass of spirits he was represented as drinking his own health in the words—"Here's to my immortal soul." "Immortal soul," thought the foolish youth, "Immortal soul." He had almost forgotten that he had an immortal soul. It was a shot fired at the centre of the target: it struck him home; he was ready to drop: he sought the open air and a place wherein



to weep. The next Sabbath morning found the young scapegrace at a prayer-meeting, seeking his father's God, and before long he found peace through the blood of Jesus, and began preaching the gospel which he had so grievously abused. God knows how to get at the heart of sinners. Remember Colonel Gardiner about to commit a foul offence; he made an assination, and reached the spot an hour too soon, and while he waited he saw, or thought he saw, his Saviour, and heard a voice accusing him of ingratitude. He fled the place of his temptation, sought for pardon, and became eminent as a saint. What a surprise it must be to rebels to be thus seized in the arms of grace and transformed into friends of the King! I ask God that such a surprise may await some who are here to-day. May you also enquire in amazement, "Have I here also looked after him that seeth me?"

One other surprise Hagar had, and that was the surprise to think that she was alive. It was the common conviction of that age that no man could see God and live. She knew that she had seen him in angelic form, and she marvelled that she found herself alive and able to look up with hope. The awakened sinner, when he is met with by the God of grace wonders that he has not been cut down as a cumberer of the ground. If the Lord had met with me in a way of vengeance, and caused me to wither away from the root like the fruitless fig-tree, I could not have wondered; but to bless me in infinite compassion is a wonder indeed. If he had sentenced me to depart to the lowest hell I could not have complained; but to meet me in love, to pardon, relieve, and save me—this is a miracle of grace. Does the Lord say, 'I receive thee to my heart, and I intend to bless thee henceforth and for ever'? Then does he act like a God. Who but he would speak thus? His grace awakens an amazement which is not soon forgotten or easily expressed. The soul cries in surprise and delight—

"Depth of mercy, can there be

Mercy still reserved for me?

Can my God his wrath forbear?

Me, the chief of sinners, spare?

I have long withstood his grace,

Long provoked him to his face.

Tell it unto sinners, tell,

I am, I am out of hell!"

IV. My time has fled, or I should have asked you to notice HER HUMBLE WORSHIP. Her humble worship was expressed by her using an expressive name for the angel of the Lord. She worshipped God heartily and intelligently, according to her knowledge. She did not use the first word that came to hand, but she spake fitly, thoughtfully, and well. She knew that the Lord was the seeing God, for he had seen her; and so she worshipped him under that title, "Thou God seest me." We cannot worship "The Unknown God"; at least, such worship lacks eyes and light, and is fitter for owls and bats than for man.

Yet be it observed that she worshipped beyond her knowledge, according to her apprehension; for she said, "Have I here also looked after him?" as if she knew that she had not fully seen the Lord, but had only looked at him as he retreated from her. Like Moses, in a later day, she had only beheld the back parts of God, the skirts of his garments; his face she had not seen. The Hebrew has that force. Hagar felt there was much more of God than she had seen, and in that belief she worshipped and adored with lowliest reverence.

Her worship was wonderfully personal. It is not "God sees," but "Thou God seest me"; and it is not, "Has God looked after his creature?" but "Have I here also looked after him that seeth me?" True religion is always personal, but it becomes wonderfully so when a man is specially arrested by sovereign grace; for then he adores as if he were the only man in the universe, and beholds God as if no other eye throughout all the ages had ever beheld him. Oh, it is wonderful to feel alone with the Lord, while the Lord is searching you through and through.

Remark again, that her worship proved itself deeply true, for it was followed by immediate practical obedience to the command of the Lord. Obedience is the best of worship. She returned unto her mistress, and was subject unto her. Oh for grace this morning, if God meets with us, not to tarry a single minute in rebellion, but to return at once to subjection to the Lord! Oh, to cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God," and then to live henceforth as in his sight! It were well to keep the finger for ever in the print of the nails, that we might never lose our fellowship with Jesus, nor our joy in the great Father, nor our subjection to the ever-blessed Spirit of all grace.

**V. We will conclude by glancing for an instant at the well which became THE SUGGESTIVE MEMORIAL of this special manifestation and singular experience.** That well—we do not know what it had been called before—but that Beer, or well, was henceforth called Beer-lahai-roi, or the well of him that liveth and seeth. Will we not all at this time drink of that well? It was a very

happy thought to attach a holy name to a well, so that every traveller might learn of God as he refreshed himself. When a person comes to drink at certain fountains, he reads, "Drink, gentle traveller, drink and pray." The inscription is most suitable. It is fit that men should pray when they receive so precious a refreshment as pure water. It was specially meet that travellers should henceforth and for ever pray at a spot where the Lord himself had been, and had called to himself a wanderer who had felt compelled to cry, "God lives, and God sees."

Brethren, there is a God, and we know it. He is not an abstraction far away; but he is a reality, and sees and observes, and takes care of men and women. Many of us have proved this to be a fact. Now, next time you eat, worship him that lives and sees; next time you drink, worship him that lives and sees. Let our tables and our wells remind us of him who removes our hunger and quenches our thirst.

Better still, let this very name of God—"the living and the seeing One"—be as a well of water to you, for the comfort of your hearts. By this may your griefs be assuaged. "Mother is dead!" What a loss is the death of a mother to many a girl, and to many a young man! "Mother is dead" is the token of temptation without defence. Such a stay and holdfast mother often is, that when she is gone Satan gets a dire advantage over a young soul. Yet if mother be gone, the Lord lives, and all the gentleness and kindness of a mother are treasured up in him. God lives: think of that, and be comforted. This well is never dry. Your father is dead, or your dear, kind brother is dead, and you are left alone to bear the buffetings of a cruel world. Never mind. Let not your heart fail you. Do not run away. God lives and sees. He in whom is all fatherhood, and all friendship, and all kindness, still stands hear you watching for your good. Come and drink at this well. The waters are cool and clear. Drink, and live. Did I hear you cry out in anguish, "Nobody cares for me"? Do you say, "Nobody knows me in this terrible city. Here I am in this great London as much deserted as Robinson Crusoe on his lone island"? I know what you mean. London is worse than a wilderness to many; a man may lay himself down and die in these streets, and nobody will care for him. The millions will pass him by; not for want of kindness, but from want of thought. There is no such horrible wilderness as a wilderness of men. Yet, take comfort: the living God sees thee! He seeth not as man seeth, with a mere gaze of cold notice; but his heart goes with his eye. You have not prayed yet, but he hears your affliction. Oh, begin to pray, and he will speedily deliver! Spread your case before him, and he will regard your petition. I would encourage you to get alone, if you are in sorrow and sin, and tell it all out before God, and see if he does not deliver you. Some of us have gone to him in plights as terrible as yours, and we have ordered our cases before him, and he has answered us. We can truly say, "He hath delivered us"; and therefore we encourage you to seek his face in like manner. May the Lord bring you to seek him at once, for his great love's sake, and then to him shall be glory for ever and ever. Amen

## GOD'S OVERTAKING MERCY

Genesis 16:8, 13

A Sermon

PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 17TH, 1916.

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

On Lord's Day Evening, 22nd February, 1871.

"And he [the angel of the Lord] said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai."—Genesis 16:8.

"And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"—Genesis 16:13.

HAGAR had lived for many years in Abraham's family. This was no small advantage. While all the rest of the world was in heathendom, the light shone brightly in Abraham's tent. Not only was Abraham himself a worshipper of the Most High God, but he commanded his household after him. We may rest assured that there were family gatherings for devotion—that the patriarch took occasion, both by precept and example, to teach the knowledge of the true God to all that were in his service. His was the central spot of light in the world, and all around him was the thick gloom of heathenism. Yet I do not find that Hagar, during the years she lived with Abraham, even when she saw his faith in going forth from his kindred and his country, and dwelling in tents in the promised land—I do not find that she herself received any personal call from God, or had a word from the angel of mercy to her own soul. And truly in this she is like very many servants, ay, and sons and daughters too, in godly families who are surrounded by the light, but yet see not; who are where God speaks, and yet he has not spoken personally to them; who enjoy the means of grace, but have never yet got the grace of the means—who are themselves strangers in the midst of Israel, foreigners, though they dwell in the land itself. Now it would be a source of the greatest imaginable joy to many of us if some of these should be called as Hagar was—should hear the voice from heaven, and be enabled to make the double discovery which she made, namely, that God saw her, and that she might come into contact with God—might look to him who had seen her.

At this time I shall first direct your attention to a very interesting circumstance, namely:—

## **I. THE SINGULAR SEASON CHOSEN BY GOD FOR THE INTERPOSITION OF HIS MERCY.**

Let us dwell on that a moment. God displays his sovereignty in saving souls, both in the souls whom he chooses to save, in the instrumentality he uses in calling them, and in the conditions of mind in which he finds them when he is pleased to look upon them in mercy.

Now Hagar at that time—at the time when the angel called to her—seemed to be in somewhat an unlikely state to be visited of God. She was, first of all, at that moment smarting under a sense of wrong. She felt that Sarah had not treated her well, and in all probability Sarah had not. The Eastern mistress is often very tyrannical towards her servants, and Hagar stood very much in the position of a slave. We do not doubt but what the jealous wife had been very severe—unjustly severe towards the woman. There she sat by the well, feeling bitterness in her own soul, that in the house of good people where she had expected better things she had been treated with injustice. It did not seem likely that the God of Abraham should call her, when her heart was seething like a pot with indignation against the household where God was worshipped. At the same time, as she turned the matter over and her soul grew more and more bitter within her, I should not wonder but what she felt she had brought a good deal of it upon herself. She was but the servant, and she had desired to play the mistress. She had despised the mistress; no doubt spoken to her very contemptuously; and now it had returned upon her, and she was made to suffer for her own pride. Her proud, fierce spirit, perhaps, did not admit it, but yet she must have felt in her conscience that much of what was wrong about her she had, notwithstanding, brought upon herself. Now when a person is under such a feeling as that, disturbed, tossed to and fro, vexed, distracted, it does not seem a likely time for them to hear the voice of God speaking to their souls.

Moreover, at that moment she was leaving all that was good; she had turned her back upon the household, the chosen household—left it, I will not say deliberately, but at any rate she had left it; she was going down into Egypt—going “anywhere, anywhere out of the world,” so that she could but get away from the place where her bondage had become irksome. She was going she scarce knew where, but she did know probably that she was going into heathendom, among heathenish people. The best she could hope to meet with was separation from God. She could not but feel that it was black darkness which was before her, and she was rushing madly into it because her high spirit would not bend—would not bow—would not yield before the majesty of the Most High. I think I see her there, her eyes red with weeping, her spirit broken down with the hunger of her journey, sitting a while and refreshed a moment, and resolved not to stoop and never to go back, and then again shuddering at the darkness that lay before her, and afraid to go on. It was in such a state as that that God met with her; to all intents and purposes she was a friendless, outcast woman. She had left the only tents where she could claim a shelter; she had gone into the wilderness—no father, no mother, no brother, no sister to care for her. She turned her back upon those who had any interest in her, and now she was left alone, alone, alone in a desert land, without an eye to pity or a hand to help. It was then, under those peculiar circumstances of trial and of sin commingled, that God met with her.

I have been wondering in my soul, when I turned over this text, whether there would stray into this Tabernacle some kindred case, and whether, though no angel spake, yet the voice of man might be to-night the voice of the messenger of the covenant to some poor soul. I know thee not by name, nor face, yet I know well thy feeling. It may be to-night thou art sorely angry, greatly vexed, smarting, wrathful, thou hast made up thy mind to choose the world and give up every semblance of that which is good. It may be to-night that thou hast lost everything that makes earth worth living in. Thou longest for death, thou wouldest almost seek the place where the lamps quiver on the dark river, for thy spirit is bitterness itself, thy lamp of hope is gone out. Oh! but it may be that this is the night when God’s mighty mercy is ordained to meet with thee—the very evening in which the Lord shall call out thy name, and thou shalt feel that he knows thee, thy case, and thy circumstances, and that he has come to call thee to himself as thou never mightest have been called had not these extremities of thine brought God to thy rescue and to thy salvation! I do not suppose that there will be anyone whose case exactly resembles that of the text, but it has sometimes happened that the turning point of human life has been the point of great sorrow, and great penury, and distress of mind on account of some gigantic fault, or it has been the time of some dreadful alternative put before the soul, in which it seemed as though it must be God or devil that night, heaven or hell that night, eternal joy or eternal misery that night. On some such strange occasion as this in your mental history you have come here to-night; may God, who is here, speak with you. A singular season for mercy. Now, secondly, let us look at:—

## **II. THE MODE OF MERCY, OR THE HOME QUESTIONS WHICH THE ANGEL PUT TO HER.**

She is sitting there by the well; it is in a desert; it may be a little oasis on the road; but there is no one within sight, nor any probability of any caravan passing that way. As she sits quite still she hears a voice, “Hagar.” She starts, she looks up, and there is a brightness like the sun above her; brighter than the sun at noonday does it shine. She can scarce bear the light, and she hears it again, “Hagar, Sarah’s maid.” Whoever it is that is speaking knows who she is, and what she is, and all about her. “Whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go?” She is so startled, she has just been thinking of the place from whence she came, and that dismal question had just been starting her mind. “Whither wilt thou go?” She felt that there was no place for her to go to. It was only a choice of equal horror—she knew not where to go. Now remark this, that very often the gospel call comes to the sons of men not by a voice heard by the ear, but through the ministry in the way of describing the person’s case with minute accuracy. It was the

Saviour's way of doing it when he was on earth. The woman was by the well; the Saviour spoke to her. The words did not seem to take effect. He turned the subject, and he said, "Go, call thy husband and come hither." "I have no husband," said she. If she could blush, she blushed then—"I have no husband." "Thou hast well said, 'I have no husband,' for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly." Then the shock went to her very heart; she perceived that he who spoke was something more than man. And when the gospel fully preached describes the sinner, paints him, photographs him, holds it before him, and makes him say, "Why, that is myself; he speaks of me—it is even me," then it is that the soul perceives what Hagar perceived, that God saw her, and that she might look to God.

Now I shall not endeavour to make any picture of you, dear hearer. If I were to try it I could not do it; it is only the Lord himself that guides us in such matters; but I will put the question to you, "Whence comest thou?" Did you come into the condition in which you now are out of a godly parentage? Have you got into London sin, but was there a time once when you knelt at your mother's knee at eventide and repeated a gracious prayer? Ah! you have spent many a day and many a night in the haunts of sin! You were once a teacher in the Sabbath school—once a lover of the gospel (at least professedly so) which now you turn from and abhor. "Whence comest thou?" From old impressions that have been forgotten, from an old profession that has been disgraced, honourable once, dishonourable now—a servant of God once ostensibly, but now a servant at the devil's altar—a ringleader in sin it may be, though once thou wert at heaven's own gates. "Whence comest thou?" Remember whence thou hast fallen, and repent. And "whither wilt thou go?" Oh! let me put the question! You stand to-night just here, "Whither wilt thou go?" Another sin tempts thee to-night; wilt thou commit it? I would fain stand with thee, as the old Scythian did of old when his country was about to be invaded by the foe. He drew a line before the chieftain of the invading host, and said, "Cross that line, and there is war for ever; stay there, and there may be peace." I put a line before your steps to-night; in the name of the everlasting God, I charge you cease from that sin. Once more commit it, and it may be that no mercy's trumpet shall ever sound out a message of forgiveness to thee again. "Whither wilt thou go?" Oh! go not like a dog to thy vomit, like the sow that was washed to her wallowing; go not further, for "whither wilt thou go" in the future? A man who sins to-day will sin worse to-morrow, and the next day worse. Many a young man when he has commenced with what are called the follies of London life had no idea that he would end it debauched, depraved, and abandoned. Many a woman when she has once begun to trifle with sin had no idea that her name would be coupled one day with infamy. Many a young man at his master's till is scrupulously honest to-day, and never dreams that he will one day be a thief. Yet he is about to take a step that will surely make him so—the first step to evil. Oh! "whither wilt thou go?" I believe that many a man, many a woman, if they could go back twenty years and be young people again and have their history written, the true history as they lived it, would say, "I never shall live so. Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" They would have been indignant at the supposition that they could ever be capable of the transgression into which they have now actually fallen. "Whither wilt thou go?" Halt! halt! ye that that are marching on to evil, halt! in the name of him that liveth, halt! lest you march to damnation and take one step that shall be your inevitable ruin, for this is the worst of it. "Whither wilt thou go?" The way of sin is the way of destruction. Men cannot sin and be happy. The end, the end, the end, the end of it, oh! think of it! It is not to-day, nor to-morrow, but it is that dying hour; nay, it is not that only, it is that hour when, up from among the dead, you shall arise amidst the ringing of the last judgment trump. It is that opening of the books, that reading of the several dooms—that separation of the righteous from the wicked—it is that which hangs upon this question, "Whither wilt thou go?" Oh! go not to the judgment unforgiven—go not to the judgment to be condemned, to be cast into the place "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." God save you, sinner; may he save you to-night instrumentally by the force of those two questions, "Whence comest thou? Whither wilt thou go?"

And now let us notice attentively, having observed the remarkable season and the home questions, let us notice attentively:—

### III. THE DISCOVERY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The description had been so accurate; "Hagar, Sarah's maid." The questions had been so pertinent, had stuck so close to her soul; "Whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" that she said, "It is God, it is God that speaks to me." And there came home to her what she had often heard before, but never felt. "There is a God; God is not an impalpable somebody up there, who has nothing to do with me, but there is God here, here, and he sees me; it is God that deals with me—not far away, asleep, or blind, but God sees me." Oh! it is a glorious thing when a soul starts up to that conviction, "I am not alone, I am not friendless after all; there is a God, and a God who sees me and who takes such notice of me that he speaks to me." A man is never saved until he gets to feel something of the nearness of God, God in Christ Jesus, but yet God. Consciousness of Deity is one of the marks of salvation. Now Hagar's thoughts must have been something like this. After all, there is somebody that has seen me, and marked all my past life, though I did not see him. He knows everything that I have done or thought, or said, and I perceive now that he has spoken to me, that he cares about me. I thought Abraham did not care for me, Sarah was angry, and then I said, "No man cares for my soul, and I will away." Now I see that God was watching me, and he has cared about me, and though he did not interpose to help me just then, just when I was so bitterly oppressed, yet I know he has cared for me, for at last, when I was sitting on this well alone, he spoke to my soul. Sinner, I pray the Holy Ghost to make just this discovery to you, that, after all, God does care about you. He that made the heavens and the earth does think of you. Though you are little, and less than nothing as compared with the bulk of his vast creation, yet on you he sets his eyes, for you he has a care. "Well," said she in her soul, "seeing that he cares for me, he will

interpose on my behalf." The angel, who spake, spoke words of comfort to her heart—told her that there was a happier lot in future in store for her than she dreamed—sent her away with a comfortable word ringing in her ears. Oh! soul, I pray God to do that for thee to-night. Thou hast said, "God has forgotten me." He knows all about thee. It may be this is the truth—I hope it is—that thy name is written on the palms of Jesus' hands. What if it should turn out that thou, rebellious sinner that thou art, art one whom God loved before the foundation of the world? What if thou art one of his chosen, whom the Saviour bought with blood? What if thou art one that shall surely sit in heaven, and wear the white robe, and sing the new song—what if thou art a favoured one of the Most High? Oh! I think I hear you say, "If I had half a thought that that was true, I would not lie down in despair; I would up and bestir myself, and I would have done with my old companions; I would have done with my old sins, if that were true." Oh! soul, I cannot tell thee that it is true—I hope it is—but I can tell thee one thing that is true, namely, that if thou wilt now come and put thy trust in Jesus Christ, and repent of thine iniquities, then it is all true. I can only know thine election by thy calling; I can only tell thy calling by thy repentance and by thy faith, and if thou shouldst find peace to-night, and I pray thou mayest, then thou art God's beloved. He that made the heavens loves thee; he that made the earth bought thee with his blood, and heaven would not be complete without thee. What if thou hast been far off by wicked works, yet still thou art a child, and heaven shall yet ring with music on thy return. What if thou hast been lost in the filth of drunkenness and all manner of lasciviousness, yet still a piece of God's precious silver, the house shall be swept for thee, and the candle lit, and thou shalt be found and put into the Saviour's treasury yet. Oh! what hope this ought to make well up in the poor hopeless sinner's heart! It is not because of your goodness, but because of his infinite goodness that he comes to meet with you, unworthy as you are, for he sees you, sees you; with thoughts of love he sees you, and to-night he interposes as he calls you by your name.

Now when Hagar made that discovery she made another at the same time. She said, "Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"—as much as to say, and probably she had not known it before, that as God could come to her, so she could go to God. "God has looked after me, and now I can look after him." There is not a great gulf between the creature and the Creator. We can send messages to heaven, and receive blessings from heaven. She felt from that moment that God was real, and living, and appreciable, and that God would hear her prayers and answer her petitions, and had really and literally spoken to her. Oh! I do not know anything that puts such strength into a man, such encouragement, such joy, makes him so patient, as the belief that God has spoken to him—that God has spoken in words of love and promise to him. Why, from that day poor Hagar would say, "I will go back; I will go back. The God of Abraham has spoken to me. Abraham may be unkind, but I will bear it, for Abraham's God has spoken to me. Sarah may be more cross than ever—never mind, I do not know that I can tell her of it, but oh! it will be such a joy in my soul—God has spoken to me, assured me of his favour, given me a blessing." Now that young man who thinks he has been so badly treated, if he gets his sins pardoned to-night, and the Lord speaks with him, he will go back and say, "I daresay I was as much to blame as anybody, but, whether or no, I am saved and I can put up with anything now." And that man that is so poor that he would hardly dare come even into this Tabernacle because his clothes were so shabby, and he was ready to say, "I will give up the battle of life; I will never try again"—oh! if he were able to say, "I know that God has spoken with me to-night, brought me to the Saviour's feet, and blotted out my sin"—oh! dear brother, you will pick up the weapons again and go to the battle of life once more, and your poverty will seem to have lost its edge; the bitterness will have departed; the iron will not enter into your soul. Get a word from God, and know that you are his child, and you can say, "Now blow ye winds, rage ye waves, and all ye elements let forth your fury, the God that rules you all is now my friend; no hurt can you do to me." If you notice, it was just so with Hagar when she had heard the voice of the Lord, and perceived that God saw her and that she could speak to God—then at once she went back. Told to go back, back she went—submitted herself. You don't find her again personally—though the old blood came up afterwards in her son—you don't find her quarrelling with her mistress, but she patiently bears her lot, in the recollection of the blessing that she had received. This is just the way with men, wilful, wayward, headstrong—when they get the grace of God, they bend their shoulders to Christ's yoke and they become tame and gentle. Because they are happy in God's love they are patient at the ills of this life. Remember the story of the poor raving maniac. They had often bound him with chains, but he snapped them asunder. He had left his family—gone to dwell among the tombs. He made night hideous with his screams and howlings. Men dared not pass that way, for he was worse than a wild beast. He had cut himself and rent his flesh, torn himself with stones and briars—none could tame him. But after Jesus had said to the evil spirit, "I charge thee that thou come out of him," we find him clothed, which he had not been for many a day, in his right mind, and sitting at the feet of Jesus. Oh! if some wild spirit be here now, some spirit driven to it by suffering, by neglect, by injustice from others, and also by its own personal sin, if the Lord bring thee to trust in Jesus, his dear Son, and see thy sin all laid upon him, then thou wilt, even at this moment, be a different man. Thy wife will scarce know thee, nor thy children either; thou wilt become another than thou hast ever been before. Thou wilt go back to thy business, back to thy burdens, back to thy sufferings, and bear it all for the sake of him that spake out of heaven and saved thy soul.

Now the most of this I daresay is not applicable to the most of you. You know I have been thinking, while preaching, that you might say I had not been preaching except to some one or two that were here. Well, I will tell you my excuse. "What man of you, if he hath an hundred sheep, if he lose one, doth not leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is gone astray?" After that gone-astray one I have gone, and my Master too. Amen.