Have you ever felt like nobody saw you? Like you were just existing in the background of someone else's story—doing everything you were told, but still not enough to be noticed?

Hagar did.

She wasn't the wife. She wasn't the chosen vessel. She wasn't even part of the promise. She was a servant. An outsider. A tool used in someone else's plan. And when things got messy—she was discarded, rejected, and left to wander in the wilderness.

But that's not where her story ended.

Because in the dry place, in the lonely place, in the place where she thought no one would come looking for her—God showed up.

And when He did, she didn't just get help—she got a revelation. She discovered something no one else had ever said before. She called Him, "El Roi"—the God who sees me.

That's what we're talking about today.

The God who sees you when others overlook you.

The God who speaks to what you're carrying.

The God who meets you by the well.

Let's get into this Word. Because somebody's about to realize—you've never been unseen. Not for a moment.

I. A Womb Without Promise

Genesis 16:1-3

"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai."

"And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife."

Let's pause here and walk through what's happening.

This is a moment of tension between divine promise and human impatience. God had already spoken to Abram. The Lord said, "I will make of thee a great nation" (Genesis 12:2). He had declared, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars... so shall thy seed be" (Genesis 15:5). God had *already promised* a seed. But time passed. A decade went by. Sarai's womb remained barren. And the silence of heaven made the voice of doubt louder.

Sarai was still waiting on God, but now she started wondering if maybe she needed to help Him out. Maybe the promise was real, but the method was flexible. Maybe God needed a little nudge. After all, it had been ten long years, and her biological clock had not just ticked—it had rung the alarm.

So she makes a suggestion. A carnal one. A culturally acceptable one. But a spiritually disastrous one.

Cultural Context:

In that day, it was common in Mesopotamian culture for a barren wife to give her servant to her husband. This was not uncommon. If the servant gave birth, the child would legally belong to the wife. So Sarai wasn't inventing something crazy—she was following the customs of the world around her.

But hear me now: just because something is *culturally normal* doesn't mean it's *spiritually approved*.

Sarai had a promise. She had a word from the Lord. But when faith wavers and flesh starts scheming, we start doing things that look reasonable, but are rooted in doubt.

Have you ever done that?

Have you ever gotten tired of waiting and said, "Maybe God meant I was supposed to do it this way"?

Have you ever adjusted the will of God to fit your feelings?

This is how people end up marrying the wrong person, taking the wrong job, starting ministries out of timing, or putting themselves in places God never sent them.

They say, "Well, I know God promised, but maybe He meant I should..."

Be careful when you start trying to help God fulfill His own word.

He doesn't need your shortcuts.

He needs your surrender.

Hagar's Role:

And here's where Hagar steps in. Let's not forget about her.

She is **an Egyptian**—a slave, a servant, a foreigner. She's not part of the promise. She's not part of the family. She has no authority, no covenant, no say in the matter. She didn't volunteer. She didn't offer herself. **She was chosen, but not valued.**

Hagar is a tragic figure here. She becomes **a tool** in someone else's impatience. Used, but not loved. Taken, but not protected. Blessed with life in her womb, but burdened with the brokenness of the house she served.

And yet—God saw her. That's the thread we'll follow through this whole chapter.

Some of you have been there.

- You got pulled into something that wasn't your fault.
- You were obedient, and it got you rejected.
- You didn't ask for the pain, but it came anyway.
- You were just trying to serve, and you ended up in sorrow.

Let me tell you something straight from heaven: God sees that.

He sees the Hagar in you.

And even when the plan falls apart, and the people forget you, **the God of Abraham still knows your name**.

II. The Wound of Rejection

Genesis 16:4-6

"And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes."

"And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee."

"But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face." This is a tragic spiral.

Hagar obeys the command she was given. She does what she was told to do—become a surrogate, carry the child, submit to Sarai's plan. But the moment she conceives, Sarai sees her differently. And truthfully, **Hagar sees herself differently too**.

There's now a tension between them. Hagar begins to feel elevated. Sarai begins to feel threatened. What was meant to fix the situation has only fractured the household.

And the deeper wound? Abram steps back. The man who was supposed to cover the household—**checked out**. When Sarai brings the issue to him, he essentially says, "Do whatever you want with her."

No correction. No comfort. No defense.

Abram washes his hands of it and leaves Hagar **unprotected**.

This is a picture of betrayal.

- Betrayed by Sarai, who used her then despised her.
- Betrayed by Abram, who allowed her to be mistreated.
- Betrayed by the very household she served.

She was faithful. She submitted. She obeyed.

And now—she's being pushed out.

Let me speak plainly: this is where many believers get wounded.

- You gave your time.
- You gave your loyalty.
- You served with sincerity.
- And then someone turned on you.
- They threw you out with the trash after you helped build the very thing they benefit from.

Hagar represents every person who has been **faithful but forgotten**.

And what does she do?

She flees.

She runs into the wilderness. She doesn't pack a bag. She doesn't have a plan. She doesn't even know where she's going. She just knows she can't stay there anymore.

She wasn't running away from destiny—she was running from dysfunction.

That's an important distinction.

Some people accuse others of backsliding when really... they're just *bleeding*. They didn't walk away from the church. They walked away from the place where they were wounded.

They weren't rebellious—they were trying to survive.

Psalm 34:18 says:

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

That's Hagar.

Wounded. Weary. Wandering.

And yet—the Lord was near.

Let me tell somebody: your rejection didn't disqualify you from the presence of God. If anything, it drew Him closer.

When people throw you out, God pulls you in.

When people use you and lose you, God finds you and fills you.

When the house you served turns its back on you, **Heaven opens its arms toward you**.

Some of your greatest encounters with God will come after your greatest rejections from man.

Don't let bitterness take root. Don't let offense harden your heart. Because just a few verses later... we're going to see the **God of Glory walking into the desert, just to find one forgotten woman.**

III. Found in the Wilderness

Genesis 16:7

"And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the way to Shur."

Here comes one of the most beautiful interruptions in all of scripture. Hagar is on the run. Not just physically, but emotionally. She is fleeing not only the house of Abram, but the weight of rejection, the sting of betrayal, and the confusion of what just happened to her life.

She's pregnant, abandoned, and alone in the wilderness. She didn't ask for this pregnancy. She didn't ask to be a surrogate. She didn't ask for rejection. But there she is—wandering in a dry place, without direction.

And this is where God steps in.

The Angel of the LORD

This is the very first time in all of scripture that the phrase "the angel of the LORD" appears. And this is not just any angel. Most theologians agree that this is a **theophany**—a visible manifestation of the LORD Himself.

This is God coming near. Not from a distance. Not through thunder or lightning or fire on a mountain. But God coming personally to a slave woman—in the desert. Not a priest. Not a prophet. Not a patriarch. But to **Hagar**. The Egyptian. The outcast. The used. The rejected.

He Found Her

The Bible says, "He found her by a fountain of water."

Let's be clear—God didn't stumble across her. He didn't say, "Oh! There she is." No, no. **He went looking for her.**

He knew exactly where she was, and exactly when to show up.

Psalm 139:7–10 says:

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there... Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

God's presence is not restricted to places of power. His presence flows into deserts. It flows into dry places. It finds people who feel discarded.

Let me say it plain: You can't outrun the God who sees.

You might be sitting in a spiritual wilderness today.

You might have walked out of a house of chaos, and now you're wondering what's next. But just like Hagar, **God knows where to find you.**

The Well in the Wilderness

This wasn't just a random location. She was **by a fountain of water**. The Lord didn't meet her in a dried-up patch of sand. He met her where **living water** was flowing.

- In the dry place, He provided refreshment.
- In the wilderness, He gave her a well.
- In her moment of breakdown, He created a place of breakthrough.

Throughout scripture, water is often symbolic of life, cleansing, and the Spirit.

Isaiah 41:18 says:

"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water..."

That's exactly what He does for Hagar.

He doesn't just speak to her. He refreshes her.

He meets her where no one else would look for her—and He gives her living water.

When man throws you out, God finds you.

When the house says you're no longer useful, God says you're still valuable.

When your value is dismissed by people, your destiny is still known by God.

The well in the wilderness tells us this truth: **God sees you when nobody else does.** He will find you by the fountain and give you a future.

IV. Questions That Reveal

Genesis 16:8

"And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai."

Now we come to a holy conversation—God speaks.

But notice—He doesn't start with comfort. He doesn't start with instruction. He doesn't even start with a promise.

He starts with a question.

"Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?"

Let's stop right there.

God Calls Her by Name and Title

He doesn't say, "Hey, stranger."

He says, "Hagar." He knows her name. She may have felt invisible, but she was not

anonymous to Heaven.

And He says, "Sarai's maid." Why? Why would He call her that?

Because God is not trying to insult her—He's reminding her of her place and purpose.

She was still in covenant proximity. She was still connected to the household of faith. Though Sarai and Abram had failed her, **God had not severed her assignment**. She was still part of something larger than she understood.

Two Questions That Confront the Soul

"Whence camest thou?"

"Whither wilt thou go?"

These two questions are the same ones every one of us must face in our walk with God.

1. Where did you come from?

This is not about geography—it's about origin and condition.

- What's the condition of your heart?
- What broke you?
- What are you running from?
- What wound did you leave bleeding?

Hagar had to face the truth: I came from a place that mishandled me. I came from pain. I came from rejection.

God won't heal what you pretend doesn't hurt. He won't restore what you won't admit is broken.

2. Where are you going?

This is the future question. It's vision-based.

- What's your plan?
- Do you even have one?
- What does your tomorrow look like if God doesn't interrupt it?

Hagar didn't have an answer. She said, "I flee." That's it. No destination. No plan. Just running.

That's what trauma does—it makes us reactive instead of directional.

You end up in survival mode, not purpose mode.

You don't know where you're going—you just know you can't stay where you were. And that's a dangerous place, because **without vision, the people perish** (Proverbs 29:18).

God's Questions Aren't for His Knowledge—They're for Your Revelation

Any time God asks a question in scripture, it's not because He lacks the answer. It's because He's drawing **something out of you**.

- "Adam, where art thou?"
- "Ezekiel, can these bones live?"
- "Who touched me?"
- "Who do men say that I am?"
- "Lovest thou me?"

God questions are **soul-shaking**. They don't seek information—they **unlock transformation**.

If God has been asking you hard questions lately...

- "Why are you still bitter?"
- "Why are you afraid to go back?"
- "Why do you keep running?"
- "Why are you hiding that pain?"
 - ...It's not because He wants to shame you.

It's because He wants to reveal something about you and to you.

He asked Hagar those two questions not to condemn her—but to prepare her. Before God ever tells you to go back, or gives you a promise, He'll first make you face your truth. Because you can't step into divine purpose if you're still running from emotional wounds.

V. The Call to Return and Submit

Genesis 16:9

"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands."

Let's be honest—this is the hardest verse in the entire chapter.

Here is a broken woman, mistreated and rejected, sitting by a fountain in the wilderness. And after God finds her, after He calls her by name, after He asks her those heart-piercing questions... He tells her to **go back.**

Wait, what?

Let's read it again—"Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands."

Let that settle in.

- Go back to the woman who wounded you.
- Go back to the place that cast you out.
- Go back to the situation that broke your heart.

Now let me clarify—**God is not endorsing abuse**. He's not telling her to stay in torment or be someone's doormat. He is calling her to **finish her assignment** and not abort what He is forming in her life prematurely.

Why would God say that?

Because she was still carrying something tied to the covenant.

Because she still had a role in what God was going to do.

Because sometimes your temporary affliction is part of your eternal positioning.

She wasn't just carrying a baby. She was carrying a prophecy.

She wasn't just a servant. She was a sign.

Hagar had to learn what many of us have to learn:

Submission is not a sign of weakness—it is a setup for elevation.

The same God who told her to go back would later **meet her again**, speak to her again, and **bless her son**. But if she had kept running, she would have missed it.

1 Peter 5:6 says:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

You may feel like you're "under"—under pressure, under people, under oppression. But if you humble yourself *under God's hand*, even when it looks like you're under man's hand, there is a due season coming.

God told her to go back, not because He was blind to her pain, but because **He was** committed to her purpose.

Some of us want a word that sends us forward—but sometimes, God sends us *backward* before He launches us *forward*.

- Back to forgiveness.
- Back to discipline.
- Back to the altar.
- · Back to submission.
- Back to finish what we walked away from.

Because sometimes the breakthrough is on the other side of obedience.

The oil didn't multiply until the widow shut the door and poured.

Naaman didn't get healed until he dipped seven times.

And Hagar won't step into revelation until she returns and submits.

For the One Who's Tired:

You may be running from something that still needs to be resolved.

God is not telling you to go back to pain—He's telling you to go back to purpose.

Back, so He can bring you through it properly.

Because running may bring you temporary relief, but **obedience brings permanent** reward.

VI. God Speaks to What You're Carrying

Genesis 16:10-12

"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude."

"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction."

"And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Now pay close attention to what just happened. Up until this point, Hagar has said nothing of faith, nothing of vision, and nothing of hope. She didn't cry out like Hannah. She didn't pray like Rachel. She didn't plead like the Syrophoenician woman. She just ran.

But the Lord still speaks to what's inside her.

And this is where the lesson turns deeply prophetic: **God doesn't just speak to her—He** speaks to what she's carrying.

God Sees the Seed in You

Verse 11: "Behold, thou art with child..."

This sounds like obvious information. But spiritually, it's powerful.

God is confirming that what's inside her is not a mistake—it has meaning.

She didn't ask for this child. She didn't plan for this child. But God still gives the child a name, a future, and a word. Because what man begins in brokenness, **God can still bless by His mercy**.

Even though Ishmael is not the promised seed, he is still seen by God.

And Hagar needed to know—you're not just rejected, you're pregnant with purpose.

Call His Name Ishmael

The Lord tells her, "Thou shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction."

The name Ishmael means "God hears."

Not "God heard Abraham," not "God heard Sarai"—God heard you, Hagar.

This is the first time in scripture where **God names a child before he is born—and He does it for an Egyptian handmaid.**

Let that settle in.

She didn't pray, but He still listened.

She didn't fast, but He still responded.

She didn't come to Him—He came to her.

That's the mercy of our God.

That's the compassion of the One who sees and hears.

The Prophetic Description of Ishmael

"He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him..."

This is not a curse—it's a **description**. Ishmael would grow to become strong, independent, untamed by social expectations. He would not be like Isaac, dwelling in tents and waiting for inheritance. He would be a fighter, a survivor.

And that, in many ways, was a reflection of the environment he came from—**rejection**, **wilderness**, **and struggle**.

But even in that, God gives Hagar a promise:

"He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

In other words, **he will not be cut off**. He will still have a place.

Even though he wasn't born through promise, God still made provision.

God doesn't just speak to your situation—He speaks to your potential.

Even if your current condition is chaos, He still sees what's growing in you.

There are some promises in you that were birthed in pain.

Some anointing that was formed in rejection.

Some callings that were conceived in the middle of confusion.

But that doesn't mean they're illegitimate—it means they're miraculous.

Some of you are pregnant with destiny, but because it didn't come the way you thought it would, you've been tempted to reject it.

But God says, "Don't despise the seed just because it didn't come through the path you planned."

He still names it.

He still multiplies it.

He still anoints it.

What you're carrying is real.

What you're carrying is alive.

What you're carrying is heard by God.

VII. El Roi: The God Who Sees Me

Genesis 16:13

"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?"

After all the pain, the questions, the running, and the revelation—Hagar says something that shifts the entire narrative. She gives God a name. This is powerful. This is intimate. This is personal.

She says, "Thou God seest me."

In Hebrew, that name is **El Roi**—"The God who sees."

This is the **only time** in scripture where someone gives God this title. And the one who says it?

Not a patriarch.

Not a prophet.

Not a priest.

But a rejected, runaway, Egyptian servant girl.

Let that sink in.

God revealed a part of Himself to **Hagar** that He hadn't revealed to anyone else yet.

She Wasn't Forgotten—She Was Seen

This wasn't a casual glance. This was divine, intentional seeing.

He didn't just see where she was.

He saw what she was feeling.

He saw the **depth of her rejection**.

He saw the cry behind her silence.

He saw the injustice, the confusion, the loneliness.

You may feel like no one notices your faithfulness.

Like no one sees your struggle.

Like no one understands what you're carrying.

But I came to remind you: El Roi sees you.

He Sees Me... and Yet I Still Live?

Look at the second part of her statement:

"Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"

This is awe. This is wonder. She's saying, "Did I just encounter the living God... and survive it?"

You see, in ancient culture, it was understood that **no man could see God and live** (Exodus 33:20). So for Hagar to encounter the angel of the LORD and not be destroyed—this wasn't just unusual—it was miraculous.

God didn't show up to strike her down.

He showed up to **lift her up**.

That's the kind of God we serve.

Not one who destroys the wounded—but one who dwells with the broken.

Not one who casts out the outcast—but one who comes to the one by the well.

Luke 12:6-7

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

He sees sparrows fall.

He numbers the hairs on your head.

He sees you. Every tear. Every prayer. Every time you felt alone.

The same God who saw Hagar sees you.

- When you cry at night and nobody knows.
- When you're faithful in ministry but feel invisible.
- When you're struggling to keep going and nobody notices.
- When the world has written you off—God writes your name in His book.

You are not overlooked.

You are not unseen.

You are not forgotten.

You are seen by **El Roi**, the God who sees you.

VIII. The Well of the Living One

Genesis 16:14

"Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered."

This verse is easy to read over. It seems like a small footnote—a location, a name, a geographical marker.

But it is so much more than that.

This is **Hagar's memorial moment**.

This is where pain turned to praise.

This is where survival became sacred.

This is where a woman the world forgot left a permanent reminder that **God was here**.

Beer-lahai-roi

The name she gave the well is **Beer-lahai-roi**, which in Hebrew means:

"The well of the Living One who sees me."

Not just any well.

Not just a random spring in the wilderness.

But a well that came out of revelation.

She didn't build an altar.

She didn't write a scroll.

She didn't start a movement.

She just **named the place** where God met her.

That's what some of us need to do. We need to start naming wells.

- The moment you knew God spared you from suicide—name that well.
- The day He pulled you out of addiction—name that well.
- The night He spoke to you when you were ready to quit—name that well.
- The service where He filled you with the Holy Ghost—name that well!

There Are Wells in the Wilderness

We often assume the wilderness is a place of barrenness.

But Genesis 16 reminds us that there are wells even in dry places.

In fact, many of the great moves of God in scripture happen **outside the camp**.

- Moses at the backside of the desert.
- Elijah by the brook Cherith.
- Jesus tempted in the wilderness.
- John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness.
- And now—Hagar, weeping beside a spring between Kadesh and Bered.

You see, you don't have to be in a pulpit to have a revelation.

You don't have to be in a revival service to have an encounter.

You can be broken, bruised, sitting in the middle of nowhere—

and God will turn that barren place into a well of life.

God doesn't need to relocate you to refresh you.

He can dig a well right where you are.

In the middle of confusion. In the middle of heartbreak.

In the middle of nowhere.

God will cause living water to spring up at your feet.

"I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19).

If Hagar had never been rejected, she never would've discovered Beer-lahai-roi. If she had stayed in comfort, she would've missed the **revelation of the Living One**.

Some of your greatest discoveries about God will come in your lowest valleys.

"Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered,"

That may not mean much geographically to us today, but it tells us something powerful:

Someone remembered the place.

Someone came back and recorded the location.

Because when God shows up in your life like that—you don't just move on. You mark it.

Don't let your moment become a memory.

Make it a **monument**.

IX. Jesus at the Well

John 4:4-26 (selected verses)

"And he must needs go through Samaria."

"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."

"Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour."

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."

Now, here we are—centuries after Hagar's encounter by a fountain in the wilderness. And once again, **God sits by a well to meet a woman most would avoid**.

This is not coincidence. This is divine repetition. A pattern in scripture that reveals the character of God.

The same God who met Hagar in Genesis 16 now walks into Samaria in John 4.

The same God who revealed Himself to the castaway now reveals Himself to the outcast.

He's still the God of the well. Still the God who sees. Still the God who speaks.

He Must Needs Go Through Samaria

Why? That wasn't the common route. Most Jews went *around* Samaria. They avoided it like the plague.

But Jesus said, "I must go through it."

Why? Because there was a woman at a well that **He refused to leave behind**.

Let that preach all by itself—**God will reroute His schedule to reach one wounded woman**.

He sat down at Jacob's well, not because He was thirsty, but because **she was**.

She didn't know she needed Him.

She didn't know she was about to encounter Living Water.

She just came to the well to draw... but **He came to draw her**.

- Both were women.
- Both were social outsiders.
- Both were carrying shame.
- Both were approached by God, not the other way around.
- Both received revelation at a well.

The Samaritan woman had **five husbands**, and was living with a man who wasn't hers.

Hagar was caught in a relationship she didn't choose, and rejected for it.

But to both of them, God brought revelation.

To Hagar, He revealed Himself as **El Roi**—the God who sees.

To the Samaritan woman, He revealed Himself as Messiah—for the first time publicly.

"I that speak unto thee am he." (John 4:26)

Theologians will tell you—this was Jesus' first open declaration of His identity.

And He didn't reveal it to Nicodemus.

He didn't reveal it to the Pharisees.

He didn't reveal it at the temple.

He revealed it at a well, to a woman with a past.

God Still Meets People at Wells

He still goes out of His way for the broken.

He still waits by the well for the weary.

He still draws living water in dry places.

And if you're wondering if you're too messed up, too overlooked, too scarred, or too wounded—remember Hagar. Remember the Samaritan woman. And remember this:

God doesn't wait for you to clean yourself up before He shows up. He meets you in the desert. He meets you at the well. He meets you while you're hiding.

To the Hagar in the desert—He sees you.

To the Samaritan woman at the well—He knows you.

To the child of God reading this now—He's waiting for you.

He is El Roi.

He is Messiah.

He is the Living One who sees.

And He is still meeting people at wells.