

## Introduction

In our previous studies, we saw the Lord make a glorious, unconditional covenant with Abram. God promised him a son, descendants as numerous as the stars, and an enduring inheritance. But as we step into Genesis chapter sixteen, ten long years have passed in the land of Canaan, and Sarai remains barren. In their impatience and heartbreak, Abram and Sarai decide to take matters into their own hands. Instead of waiting on the promise of God, they manufacture a solution through the flesh—a decision that immediately brings conflict, pain, and generational sorrow.

Yet, right in the middle of human mess and desert wanderings, we see the overwhelming grace of God. As we study this chapter together today, three vital truths stand out from the text:

First, we will examine The Danger of Helping God Out, seeing how easily we default to human reasoning and step outside of God's timing when we get tired of waiting for His promises to unfold.

Second, we will look at The Conflict of the Flesh, observing the bitter division and heartache that always arise when we try to accomplish God's will through our own human efforts rather than through faith.

Finally, we will behold El Roi: The God Who Sees, encountering the incredible grace of the Lord as He meets a desperate, fleeing Hagar in the wilderness, reminding us that no matter how forgotten or cast aside we may feel, our Creator sees us, hears our affliction, and calls us to trust in His sovereign care.

Open your heart and your mind to what the Holy Spirit wants to show us today in His Word.

## Bible Study

We are looking at Genesis chapter 16, and as we go through the Bible, line by line and precept by precept, we see that these are not just dusty stories from antiquity—they are mirrors of our own hearts.

### The Danger of Helping God Out

In the first few verses of Genesis chapter 16, we find Abram and Sarai in a difficult spot. God had promised them a son, but ten years had passed in the land of Canaan, and Sarai remained barren. Now, we need to understand that in that culture, barrenness was seen as a heavy reproach.

Sarai comes up with a plan. She says, "The LORD has restrained me from bearing... go in unto my maid" (Genesis 16:2). She's trying to "help God out." How often do we do that? We get a promise from God, but when His timing doesn't align with our calendar, we start looking for a "Hagar"—a human shortcut to a divine promise.

The text says Abram "hearkened to the voice of Sarai." Now, men, there are many times we should listen to our wives, but this was a moment where Abram should have been leading in faith. Instead, he defaults to human reasoning. The result of trying to manufacture the will of God through the flesh is always conflict.

## The Conflict of the Flesh

As soon as Hagar conceives, the home becomes a pressure cooker. Hagar begins to despise Sarai, and Sarai begins to mistreat Hagar. This is what happens when we step out of God's order. We see Abram, the man of faith, caught in the middle, essentially saying, "She's your maid, do what you want."

Sarai deals "hardly" with her, and Hagar flees into the wilderness. She is headed toward Egypt, her home, but she's at a fountain in the Way of Shur. She is alone, pregnant, and desperate in a harsh desert.

## The God Who Sees

But notice the grace of God here. The "Angel of the LORD"—which many of us believe is a Christophany, an appearance of the Lord Jesus before His incarnation—finds her. He asks, "Where did you come from? Where are you going?" (Genesis 16:8).

He doesn't just give her sympathy; He gives her a command: "Return... and submit." Sometimes the hardest place to be is exactly where God wants us to grow. But He also gives her a promise. He tells her she will have a son named Ishmael, which means "God shall hear."

Hagar gives God a beautiful name in verse 13: El Roi, "Thou God sees me." She realized that even in the desert, even when she was used and cast aside by people, she wasn't invisible to the Creator.

## Practical Application for the Believer

What is the "Hagar" in your life today? Is there a situation where you are tired of waiting on the Lord, and you're tempted to take matters into your own hands?

- Wait on His Timing: When we try to force a blessing, we usually birth a "wild man" of a problem that stays with us for generations.
- Trust in His Sight: You may feel like you are in the "Wilderness of Shur" today. People may have mistreated you, or you may be suffering because of your own poor choices. Remember El Roi. He sees you, He hears your affliction, and His grace is sufficient to sustain you if you will simply submit to His lead.

## A Challenge for Followers of Jesus

I challenge you to examine your prayer life. Are you asking God to bless your plans, or are you waiting for His plan? Let us be a people who value the "Isaac" of promise over the "Ishmael" of our own efforts. Trust that the God who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it in His perfect way and in His perfect time.

## The Invitation

Perhaps you feel like Hagar—running away, lost in a desert, and without hope. You've tried to run back to "Egypt" (the world), but it offers no water for your soul.

The greatest demonstration that God sees you and loves you is the Cross. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, shed His precious blood on that cross to pay for your sins and mine. He took the judgment we

deserved so that we could be brought back into fellowship with God. His resurrection from the dead declares to the whole universe that He is truly God, Savior, and Lord.

He is not dead; He lives and He sees you right now. If you will turn from your own way and put your trust in Him, He will give you a new life and a hope that never fades. Give your life to Jesus today.