



The God Who See: Hagar

Genesis 16; 21 |

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SUMMARY

We often only get the essential details in narrative passages like this. There is no color commentary going on or Johannine parenthetical whispers (The beloved apostle often does this: "You see what was really happening was this..."). Instead we get what God felt was most important to communicate, what helps us to see his work of redemption most clearly. Read the passages together. Listen for the larger themes.

Here's one: God says: I will make a way. Sarai says: I've got my ways. God promises but Sarai says, "*Promises, promises! What good is a promised son? What I need is a real son any way I can get one!*" It was more than just short-cutting God's plan, it was a return to the ground under the tree in Eden. No devilish snake this time but the temptation is the same. Sarai like her mother Eve fails to trust God and desires to be God. Abram like Adam abdicates his role. The results, as you might expect, are disastrous. Hagar is abused by their sin. Perhaps she thought to herself: "Look, I haven't had much choice here. They've just played God in my life, and now Sarai scowls and berates me? Isn't this what she wanted?"

Hagar was fruitful whereas Sarai was barren. And when living with Abram's family became intolerable, Hagar headed for Egypt. Hagar herself, in attempting to run away to Egypt, found herself not in a land flowing with milk and honey, but on her own out in the wilderness. Iain Duguid tells us what happens next, "*Hagar was fortunate. In the wilderness, she met a better friend, the angel of the Lord. Like Eve before her, she found that her sin and failure were not the end of the story. The Lord was out there in the wilderness looking for the wanderer*" in order to turn her into a worshipper. Hagar is transformed. She returns no longer alone, but with Yahweh as her God. Her life doesn't get any easier, she ends up out in the wilderness again (Genesis 21), Yahweh has seen her and her son. He cares for her, provides for her, makes promises that will give her a future.

GROUP QUESTIONS

- What in the story of Hagar comforts, surprises, or troubles you about how God works his plan of redemption? Why do you suppose God put this story in the story of his people?
- Consider Abram and Sarai for a moment. The pattern of Eden is repeated in their lives. They make their own plans to be fruitful and multiply. How might God be calling you to trust him rather than grasping for the low hanging fruit of your own designs?
- Think about Hagar's wilderness experience. Why do you suppose God waits until she's in the wilderness to meet her? How has God met you in the wilderness?
- If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of these portions of Scripture, what is that thing?