

Names of God from the Bible

10 – The Living One who sees me

Every name of God is an eternal Name and the God who saw Hagar continues to see us.

Reading: Genesis 16:1-16

This is a story that is seldom referred to. Maybe because the whole issue is not only embarrassing to us but is also an ongoing challenge for the world today. Arabs verses Israelis, both with Abraham as their genealogical and biological father. One was the offspring of a slave girl, the other the miracle baby and offspring of the 'free' wife.

Nevertheless, the challenge remains for us in that God is the creator of both people. God knew all about both mothers and the circumstances behind the birth of their baby.

God blessed both offspring because He is an inclusive God. Yes, one was the 'chosen' line for the Messiah while the other was born outside of the Covenant. However, let's never forget that the latter applies to most of us – because we are also Gentiles. Yet through Christ Jesus, we are co-heirs with the Jews, who acknowledge Yeshua as their Messiah.

Abraham and Sarah were anxious to have a child and yet Sarah was barren. In a final act of desperation and determination to see if she could bring about God's promise to them, Sarah suggested, if not demanded, that Abraham should have sexual intercourse with Hagar. The strategy worked and Hagar became pregnant.

However, once Hagar realised she was pregnant, she began to feel superior to Sarah and treated Sarah with contempt. Sarah retaliated by complaining to Abraham, who like all good husbands, dodged the issue and told Sarah to do whatever she liked about it. Sarah mistreated Hagar and so Hagar ran away.

Hagar must have been absolutely amazed that, in her most frantic state, God sent an angel to her. Yes, she had run away from her master and mistress but she could not escape from God. God knew all about the circumstances, and exactly where she was and why. How interesting that the angel asked her, *"Where have you come from and where are you going?"* It was not as if the angel didn't know, any more than God didn't know where Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden when He called out, *"Where are you?"* No, it was to challenge Hagar to consider her situation.

I'm quite sure Hagar was confused as well as frightened, angry and lonely. She had only done what her master and mistress demanded and yet she was being punished for her compliance. But where was she to go? She was now no more than a runaway slave, carrying her master's child in her womb. Who would take her in and care for her?

Into Hagar's most distressing moment God sent His angel with good news. First, the angel told Hagar to go back home and submit to Sarah. Secondly, he told Hagar that her descendants would be too numerous to count, and thirdly, she was going to have a son and she was to call him, Ishmael. Ishmael means 'God hears', promising that whenever an Ishmaelite cries out to God, He will hear.

In humility, Hagar responded by naming the well after her encounter with God. She called it the well of *'The Living One who sees me'*.

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Hagar must have told Abraham and Sarah all about her encounter with God. It appears that life in the Abraham household settled down for a while, and when the baby boy was born, Abraham honoured Hagar's testimony by naming him Ishmael, the name God had given Hagar.

What does that name mean for us today?

The God who saw Hagar when she was in distress will see you when you are experiencing similar circumstances. God does not turn His back on us when we do wrong. He sees our mistakes and the troubles they cause, and He comes alongside us to help us when we cry out to Him for forgiveness.

Whatever challenges you are facing today, remember this: God sees, God cares and He is alongside of you. Turn to Him; give Him your doubts, fears, frustrations, guilt or loneliness and, in exchange, let Him give you His forgiveness, peace and hope.

Prayer

Father, thank You so much that You see me just as I am and love me just the same. Please forgive me for the things I have done wrong and give me Your peace, joy and hope. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Psalm 139
- John 1:43-51
- Luke 19:1-10

Questions

1. Have you ever felt that God sees what you are doing wrong? How did you feel?
2. Why did God ask Hagar where she had come from and where she was going?
3. How does Jesus see you today?