

Hagar — The God Who Sees

Study Companion

Genesis 16 and 21 | People of the Bible

Use this beside your Bible. Read the passages first. Write what you observe before reading someone else’s conclusion. The goal is not to finish quickly; it is to follow Hagar carefully.

PEOPLE-STUDY METHOD

READ THE STORY → FOLLOW THE PERSON → NOTICE THE POWER → TRACK GOD’S WORDS → COMPARE LATER SCRIPTURE → TEST OUR ASSUMPTIONS → RESPOND

1. Meet Hagar

Read Genesis 16:1–3. What facts does the text give about Hagar?

What decisions are made about her before she speaks?

TEXT: What does the passage explicitly say about Hagar’s consent?

INFERENCE: What are you tempted to assume that the text does not tell you?

2. Power in the Household

Read Genesis 16:4–6. What changes after Hagar conceives?

How does Sarai describe the wrong she believes has happened?

What authority does Abram return to Sarai?

What happens to Hagar as a result?

3. Affliction and Flight

Passage	Hebrew idea to notice	What happens?
Genesis 16:6	anah — afflict / humble	Hagar flees

Genesis 15:13	affliction predicted	Abram's descendants will be afflicted
Exodus 1:11–12	anah — afflict	Israel is oppressed in Egypt
Exodus 3:7	affliction seen	Yehovah sees Israel's suffering

What similarities do you notice? What limits should keep you from forcing a complete one-to-one parallel?

4. Found in the Wilderness

Read Genesis 16:7–10. Who finds whom?

What name/title does the messenger use when addressing Hagar?

What two questions does he ask?

Which question can Hagar answer? Which remains unanswered?

5. The Hard Command

Write the command of Genesis 16:9 in your own words without softening it.

What does the surrounding passage say about how Hagar had been treated?

What would be an UNSAFE universal rule to derive from this verse?

What can you responsibly say without pretending to know every reason behind the command?

6. Promise, Ishmael, and Hearing

What promise is given to Hagar in Genesis 16:10?

Why is her son named Ishmael?

What does the name teach you about the story's hearing motif?

7. El Ro'i — Seeing and Being Seen

Read Genesis 16:13–14 in two or three translations. How do they render El Ro'i and Hagar's explanation?

What remains clear even where translations differ?

List every "seeing" idea you notice in the passage.

8. Isaac and Ishmael: Distinction Without Erasure

Read Genesis 17:15–21. What is promised through Isaac?

What is promised concerning Ishmael?

Write one sentence that preserves BOTH truths.

9. The Second Wilderness

Read Genesis 21:8–21. What does Sarah explicitly say about inheritance?

What does Abraham feel?

What does Yehovah repeat about Ishmael?

What happens when the water is gone?

What does God hear? What does Hagar see after her eyes are opened?

10. Seeing + Hearing Map

Scene	Seeing	Hearing
Genesis 16	_____	_____
Genesis 21	_____	_____

11. Later Scripture: Galatians 4

What does Paul say he is doing with Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4:24?

What argument is Paul making in Galatians?

What details from Hagar’s Genesis story would disappear if you read her ONLY as Paul’s later symbol?

12. TEXT vs. INFERENCE

TEXT	INFERENCE / QUESTION

13. Test the Claims

“Hagar was a willing surrogate.” What does the text actually say?

“Sarah’s treatment was justified because Hagar despised her.” Does Genesis say that?

“God told Hagar to return, so abused people should always go back.” What interpretive leap is being made?

“Isaac was chosen, so God rejected Ishmael.” What evidence pushes against that?

“El Ro’i has one perfectly certain English definition.” What caution is needed?

“Galatians 4 tells us everything Hagar means.” What does that overlook?

14. My Conclusion

What does Hagar’s story most clearly show about Yehovah?

What does it show about human power?

What part of the story remains difficult or unresolved for you?

Write your conclusion in 3–5 sentences using only what you can support from the text.

Final Note

Do not rush to rescue your favorite character. Follow Hagar. Listen for what Yehovah hears. Look for what He sees. Then open your Bible again.