

I love our growing collection of Banners with God's names:

- The Creator.
- God Most High.
- God Almighty.

We add a Fourth name by which God is known, a name used only one solitary time in the Bible. But it is such a powerful reminder of what our God is like, that I just had to use this name tonight. The name in Hebrew is *EI Roi*, and it means The God Who Sees.

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The one who spoke this name of God was a handmaiden named Hagar. The name was not spoken, like many of the other names, by well-known Bible people like Abraham and Moses. That is important for us tonight.

The name was spoken by a young girl; only a handmaiden. A handmaiden was a person whose essential purpose in life was to serve or assist. It was this handmaiden who gives us one of the most amazing names by which God is known.

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Hagar was Sarah's Egyptian servant. When it seemed impossible for Sarah to have children, Sarah urged Abraham to have a child with Hagar. Hagar became pregnant, Sarah became jealous, and Hagar fled into the desert.

A person does not flee into the desert alone and with no resources unless you are at wit's end. That describes Hagar at that point. She had simply had it. Death was better than life at that point. She fled into the desert.

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The Bible says, *"The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness."* Amazing. God came to this low-level inconsequential servant Hagar.

Which means – and remember this always – that to God there is no such thing as a low-level inconsequential servant. You matter to God.

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The angel asked Hagar a question. The angel asked: *"Where have you come from, and where are you going?"*

God cares where you have come from tonight. You might have come from the best day ever to this place tonight. Or, you may have come with troubles, stresses, problems, and issues. You might be like Hagar...

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Hagar answered the angel's question by saying: *"I'm running away from my mistress."*

Notice that the angel asked two things, but Hagar answered only one. The angel asked where Hagar had been, and the angel asked where Hagar was going. Hagar answered only where she had been: *"I am running away..."*

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That answer of Hagar's speaks volumes. One of the feelings we sometimes get in life is that the best is behind us; and even what is behind us is not that great.

Hagar had, to use an illustration from a popular story, decided not to keep her fork for desert. She was going nowhere.

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The angel of the LORD said to her, *"Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority."* Wow, that sounds cruel. But we have to remember that Hagar was at fault here as well. Hagar was taunting Sarah. "I have a baby! You don't!"

Number one from the angel was to go home and make amends. Go home and be what you are called to be: the handmaiden of Sarah. Make amends.

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Then the angel said, *"I will give you more descendants than you can count."* The Lord speaks a promise to Hagar.

Hagar is not asked to just get up from the wilderness and go home to the same-old-same-oh. She goes with an understanding that God is working something out in her life.

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This means, in our vernacular, that Hagar and God are tight. [Emily taught me the importance of that phrase.] Hagar and God are tight – that is God's promise. .

They will travel through life together. Indeed, a couple years later Hagar again is in the wilderness with no resources and no hope. Again God comes to her and rescues her.

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A low-level inconsequential servant and the Lord are tight. Now Hagar is able to say where she is coming from, and where she is going.

And so can you tonight. Maybe you cannot see the details of where you are going. But you are going on a journey with God. That is the absolute truth.

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The Bible says: *“Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.”*

The name used only once in the Bible. But the text says that Hagar used the name time and again after that.

When you know where you are coming from, but you do not know where you are going, you can also use this name. For if God sees you, there are good things still to come. Just ask Hagar. Amen.