

Beer-lahai-roi

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[0 : 0 0] let's turn together now to genesis chapter 16 genesis chapter 16 going to look at the whole chapter please turn as far as verse 14 and perhaps we can just focus on the question that was put to hagar as we find that in verse eight we can read it verse seven the angel of the lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness the spring on the way to sure and he said hagar servant of sarai where have you come from and where are you going god sometimes all too often indeed is found where you at least expect him to be found and of course the greatest example of that is at calvary on the cross of christ at the crucifixion of jesus there is god the son of god in our nature and as he hangs on the cross and dies on the cross for his people it is preeminently the place where god is present at that moment though of course there's the mystery too of god's absence in a sense you know in the lord's own experience on the cross but it's true of many other contexts as well as many of you well know yourselves that god is found at times when perhaps he's least expected to be found in our distresses in our wilderness experiences the times when we feel loneliest the suffering and traumas of life many instances where god might not be expected to be present and yet he is there and he is always there for the benefit of his people wherever he comes to draw near to his people whatever circumstances they're in his intention his purpose is always towards their good towards their betterment whatever their needs are at that time that is what his presence is directed to and here you find him in this wilderness coming to draw near to this servant of sarai this egyptian servant girl the servant woman who is pregnant with abram's child and who has left the home and gone into the wilderness and as she finds herself there in the wilderness all of a sudden the angel of the lord draws near to her and then poses this really amazing question which a question which every one of us really in a sense needs to ask ourselves every day where have you come from and where are you going what have you gone away from where are you heading now and as you find this question posed to her so we'll look at that in the context context where the lord the angel of the lord has come to pose this question to her in order to address her mind in her circumstances right there in the wilderness as she's on the way to sure now there's no perfect church in this world there is no perfect family in this world there's no perfect home in this world not even a home like abram's is a perfect home a home without flaw a home without tension a home without something or other that's wrong and i'm sure we all have to confess that before god that however much we we try and provide a home for ourselves for our families for our relations for neighbors where we do the very best for them nevertheless because of our own sinfulness and proneness to lapses and to expressions of whether it be annoyance or anger whatever every home has some sort of imperfection

in it and we need to always remember that before the lord and even here in abram's family as we'll see there is a tension tension caused by the actions that he and sarai his wife took in seeking to provide an heir for abram so the first thing we look at is the family tension and then we'll look at god's tender care family tension and then we'll look at the family tension and then we'll look at the family tension family tension really begins it has its source there in what is essentially a very valid understandable concern on the part of sarai she comes to to abram and said behold now the lord has prevented me from bearing children go into my servant it may be that i shall obtain children by her and abram listened to the voice of sarai you can admire in one sense sarai's sense of self-sacrifice in that regard she is at this time herself not able to have children so she actually offers her servant girl this egyptian servant something which would have been common in the practice of the time surrogate motherhood surrogate provision of children and so she offers her servant girl servant woman to to abram and you can in a sense admire that but the thing is abram actually fell in with that he accepted that and then things begin really to go wrong and that's not actually surprising because what they're basically doing is trying to actually work the lord's promise in their own way

because god had promised that abram would have an heir that there would be someone who would be blessed as the child of the covenant who would come to carry on god's covenant promises down the line into the generations to come and as we know that of course is what happened but here you find that he and sarai are seeking to to progress that promise but it's by their own ingenuity by their own workings by their own attempts at just trying to move things along even though god at that stage has not actually approved of that method and the ground on which abraham comes here to be tempted is something that's important for us also to bear in mind he's tempted on the very ground of the promise that god had made to him and that's what becomes the temptation that's what becomes the temptation because abram and sarai here are actually in the path of impatience which leads to disobedience which leads to them trying to take things into their own hands and you can see also how abram would have uh you know some sense found it easy to acquiesce with the suggestion the proposal that sarai made because this after all is sarai whom he loves this is a proposal from her that seems on the surface to be very sound it seems to be something that is quite acceptable it's quite persuasive it's not something that you could find out and out to be absolutely wrong and you could instantly say no that's completely unacceptable and in that way abram falls in with the plan and that plan turns out to be a plan from unbelief from impatience from a failure just to wait further upon the lord and you can see for yourselves that there are lessons in that for all of us tonight in all sorts of different circumstances where instead of waiting for the lord to to guide us to speak to us through his word to give us assurance or reassurance we sometimes feel that impatience we

sometimes have that idea that we can perhaps just move things along a little bit and give the lord a bit of a hand and we come to think of our way of doing things as actually not too unacceptable at all and so what happens is of course that it comes to sorrow for them and you can see that the power of what the new testament actually calls the flesh is obvious there in abraham's case abraham is a holy man abraham's a man of god abraham a man who knows god and knows god in such a way that has already been assured even in the previous chapter there a where he is saying uh where god has has said to him that he is his shield and is exceeding great reward and where the fear not abraham for i am your shield your reward shall be very great or i am your great reward and yet so soon after that and so soon after that reassurance abraham actually falls in with a plan that's not good see that's warning us tonight that sometimes perhaps when we're really on a spiritual high if you like when we have the lord's closeness when we know that the lord is with us when we have a reassurance from god when our heart is comforted that too can be a time when temptation all of a sudden is presented to us and where the danger is that we actually then comply with what is other than the lord's will for us so we always have to watch and be on our guard and be careful even in our best moments because we're vulnerable at all times and that's what abraham found out here and the follow-on from that really was that uh uh they they had a fallout between the two of them you can see first of all there's a fallout between hagar and sarai here he is she she gave uh her maid to sit to to uh to her husband abram he went in to hagar and she conceived and then when she saw that she had conceived she looked with contempt on her mistress that wasn't right of her she had a home and she had a home where as far as we know up to this point she was well treated but of course here she had been brought into the plan of sarai and abram in such a way as made serious problems then for this servant hagar so in a sense the fault is not to be attributed to to to hagar but to sarai and abram and it's not surprising that she here looks with contempt or treats her maid her her her employer her mistress with some contempt don't excuse her for that but just put yourself in her shoes here where abram and and sarai these people of god and they had actually brought her into this situation now she finds herself even more vulnerable she's she's pregnant and unfortunately she then treats her mistress with contempt she probably uh somewhat other mocked her or uh just uh emphasized the fact that here i am i'm pregnant with abram's child and you there you are you're barren you don't have a child something along those lines quite unacceptable but in a sense understandable and you have to see that the fault is really there with her for that but also with abram and sarai for having caused that and brought that about not only is there a fallout between hagar and sarai but there's also a fallout between abram and sarai sarai said to abram may the wrong done to me be on you i gave my servant to your embrace and when she saw that she had consumed conceived she

looked on me with contempt may the lord judge between you and me and i think really that's sarai's own guilty conscience in a sense coming to the fore because it's now a blame game she's blaming abram for having accepted this for having gone along with this and yet she's the one who initiated

who instigated who proposed it that's the way sin works isn't it that's the way sin actually comes to show itself through us and through our temperament and through our behavior and sometimes when we know that we've been in the wrong we try and pass it on to others it's always been like that ever since sin entered into human experience because adam didn't accept instantly his fault when god brought him up short and confronted him and asked him the question what is this you have done and of course he instantly said what is the woman you gave me she actually gave me this to eat and i ate it he's throwing the blame on to somebody else that is the way of sin that's what our sinful hearts are naturally like even uh some someone like sarai someone who's a godly woman in many respects and yet here is the flaw here is the here is the uh the the thing in the home that's really so obvious at that point that sinfulness that belongs to them both even though they're people of god and here she is flinging the blame as it were back onto abraham abraham she attributes blame to him and in between them then comes this tension this suspicion this threat this this bad spirit this bad feeling and it's all attributed to actually having gone away from the way of the lord from having hatched a plan for themselves rather than follow through with god's will and god's time and god's timing for the promise to be made good and so sadly you find hagar leaving the home uh she said then abraham said to sarah behold your servant is that in your power do to her as you please uh maybe sounds sounds cruel but enough in a sense that's really how it was she was in fact sarai's servant she didn't belong to uh abraham in that sense she was particularly the servant of his wife sarai so abraham was quite right in saying uh she is in your power it's up to you what you do with her and of course sarai dealt harshly with her really that's a description that can contain an awful lot it's just a summary of the way that sarai went and treated her harshly probably gave her a dressing down probably spoke to her really in a way that wasn't nice criticized whatever it was but it led to hagar leaving the home she fled from her now it's not right to say that hagar actually that um sarai actually drove her out of the home it's not strictly speaking the case you don't find there anything uh of sarai saying right off you go just get out she did speak harshly to her but she didn't actually order her out of the home that was hagar's own choice of course she would have found it difficult to remain there undoubtedly but it was her choice to leave the home and it's a very very sad reproach upon sarai and abraham that has come to that point that this home belonging to people of god actually had such uh tensions within it as caused this egyptian servant woman to actually more or less be forced to leave the home over what had happened

there is no perfect home no perfect parentage no perfect relationship in this world apart from in the lord jesus christ himself but it does show us very clearly how we need to keep to the ways of the lord we need to follow the psalmist prayer every day we live lord show me your ways teach me your paths be my guide in your ways and it's one of the ways and one of the temptations that came to jesus himself in the wilderness from the devil was um using scripture and and uh asking that he cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and he quoted scripture for it is it is uh it is written he shall guard you lest you dashed your foot against a stone but of course he left out some very important words he shall guard you in all his ways or all your ways when we go up away from the ways of the lord and follow a path of our own choosing become disobedient to god we have no right and no warrant then to expect his blessing or his keeping until we come back to the way that we ought to have been in so there is family family tension family tension there in what you can say is a godly home and yet that's what's brought out and of course the bible doesn't hesitate in showing us the ugly side of human relationships even in that sort of context just so that we will actually say here is something that i need every single day to bear before god for myself individually for myself as a husband or as a father as a parent or a grandparent here is something i always need to bear in mind i have in me the potential to cause disaster to cause breakup to cause tension to bring into my relationship with others something that will hurt them that will harm them so lord help me teach me walk in your ways and then you find god's tender care secondary verse 7 the angel of the lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness the spring on the way to sure now hagar was an egyptian and she was most likely seeking to make her way back to her native land of egypt at this point but here the angel of the lord found her by a spring of water she had stopped at this point of refreshment in the wilderness probably to rest and to drink some water and then the angel of the lord finds her there and that itself is a really magnificent statement because the angel of the lord in the old testament refers almost always to a divine person some people think it's a pre-incarnational manifestation of the son of god whatever we say of that it is certainly a manifestation of god because this angel of the lord in many of the contexts that you find the angel of the lord mentioned in the old testament he speaks as god speaks he speaks in a way of being able to bless people and

so it is god that's revealed there it's god that speaks through him it's in fact um the old testament really preparing for the incarnation for the coming of the son of god as a human being or to take our humanity and it's a preparation in the old testament for that most wonderful of all manifestations and miracles the the son of god becoming human here the angel of the lord finds her in the wilderness on the way to sure see if we if we end up uh walking away from god and from keeping his ways

[20 : 15] inevitably we will begin journeying on to sure and to the wilderness and on to egypt if you like spiritually the place of darkness the place that's going to take us further away from god but the angel of the lord found her there she didn't look for him she didn't actually sit down there and begin praying and say where are you lord we're not even sure if she was a believer in god at that stage though she had been brought up as a servant at least brought to know the god of abram and and say right through their their lifestyle but the angel of the lord found her and isn't that itself such a wonderful statement that in her predicament it is god who draws near to her it is he who finds her it's the angel who actually looking out for her comes now to be beside her and to speak to her and that is a precious thing always for us to notice and then he questions her he said where have you come from and where are you going what a wonderful question or two questions built into one it wasn't enough for the angel of the lord to ask her where she had come from he also asked her where are you going in other words he's really saying to her why have you left where you were and where do you intend to end up and whenever we ourselves have left the way of the lord what to whatever extent small or great we need to hear this question we need to hear through the scripture god speaking to us through his spirit saying to us well where have you come from have you left your place of security have you left that place of welfare where you knew the nearness of the lord and where are you going to where will that way take you if you if you keep walking away from the lord i don't know what your situation is tonight i know my own i know i need this reminder every day that if i depart from the ways of the lord if i step out of that and disobedience to whatever extent then i need to hear this question is where have you come from what have you left behind where are you moving away from are you leaving the blessing and the place of blessing for something else and where are you going to where will you end up what will your future be if you leave obedience to christ and if you leave consistency of walking with him so you see we could spend a lot longer on that but these are the two vital questions and isn't it always the case if you kind of take this a little further spiritually isn't it always the case that the temptation is always there rather than face up to the problem seeking dependence on god isn't the temptation always well i'll just move away from it i'll just go somewhere else i'll just leave that for the moment and try and just manage by not dealing with this and by taking up something else if you have a problem in your life spiritually or morally you're never going to solve it by just leaving it and trying to move on to something else that's never going to work we need to face up to it have it out before the lord pray over it repent of it seek the lord's guidance through it and beyond it because that's really what uh what uh the lord's questioning or the angel's questioning of hagar here actually is about where have you come from and where are you going

she needs to face up to what it is she's left behind and to face up also to what which she's going to end up with she doesn't probably know at that stage she's just making her way forward from sure and then on to egypt and so the angel then persuades her to actually return the angel of the lord said to her she said i'm fleeing from my mistress sarai the angel said return to your mistress and submit to her the angel of the lord also said or i will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude and so on she spoke then about child she was going to bear the name he was going to be given would be ishrael and he would also be a great person and not the heir of abram not the child of the covenant but nevertheless in his own right he would be a significant person his name would be called ishrael and he persuaded hagar to go back and of course that's that's always the case for ourselves too it's very very difficult indeed it's difficult when we know that we have departed from the ways of the lord when we're backslidden to a small or great extent it is difficult then just to pick up your mind and say i just need to go back i need to have this dealt with before the lord i need to actually speak to him speak to him about it and seek in my confession and in his restoration to move on with my life properly that's essentially what we're taught from that particular point here he persuaded hagar to go back even though there are going to be very severe difficulties probably when he when she was went back to to sarai and to abram's house she knows it's not going to be easy to go back she's going to have to face up to the problems that sarai will

inevitably make for her again and even after she has given birth to the child the problems in fact as it turns out were not then lessened but increased and she knows probably at this point that's going to be the case and yet the angel says to her you return to hagar and you return hagar to to sarai go back home go back to the place you've left and in in the ways of life that is always how it is for ourselves difficult at times though it is to step back to the path of obedience to god but that's the only way of recovery the only way forward for hagar at this time is to go back if that's not a contradiction to go forward she needs to go back to where she left and so it is for ourselves so it is in the uh the pilgrim's progress you remember there that uh when christian slept uh for a time in that little hut that he had come across and he lost his role the role that he had in his in his uh in his breast pocket fell out and he had to retrace his steps to go back for it so it is with ourselves but it's always to go back and retrace your steps and then from there work forward so here is hagar she has to go back to what she left and that's the progress for her and then hagar gave names both to god and to the well the spring that she was sitting beside verse 13 she called the name of the lord who spoke to her you are a god of seeing that's the only time in the bible that god has given that name and it's by this servant woman this egyptian the servant of sarai what does it mean you are a god of seeing well it's not just saying you are a god who sees everything or sees into everything that is

obviously true but what really has gripped uh to some extent at least has gripped hagar at this point is that god has revealed himself to her you are a god of revealing a god of seeing a god of making people see because he told her there the angel of the lord as we saw told her what to do and he told her what would happen in the future you're pregnant you'll bear a son you'll call his name ishmael this is what he's going to be like so he called she called the name of the lord you are a god of revelation you could translate that a god who reveals the way to us and what a great point that is in itself that your god tonight is the god of revelation the god who reveals himself through his word the god who speaks to you and reveals himself to you through his spirit the god who takes his truth already revealed and written for our benefit and makes that effective in our lives and what happens when god blesses his word to you it's not new revelation but it's revelation as it exists being blessed to you in such a way that god becomes real in that moment and reveals himself to you through his word you are a god of seeing and then she named the well or the spring there as well she named the well beer lahai roy and if you have a footnote or side column in your bible you might find that that's there translated means the well of the living one who sees me you can build a lot in hebrew into one or two words but that's really essentially what that means beer lahai roy the well of the living one who sees me and isn't it a wonderful combination actually that you have a reference there to one who sees or one who reveals himself and a reference to a well at the same time the two things join together so wonderfully don't they because the god who revealed himself through the angel there to to hagar is the very god who sat by a well side in the region of samaria and sat by the well of sychar and revealed himself and spoke to that woman who came out to draw water the woman of samaria and of course as you go through the interview that jesus conducted with her and as he led her through point after point she came to the point where she said um we know that messiah is coming and when he has come he will tell us all things or reveal all things to us i who am speaking to you i am he beer lahai roy the well of the living one as she called it who sees me and that is of course how it is with ourselves as well as jesus said whoever drinks the water that i shall give him that same passage in john 4 shall never thirst but it shall be in them a spring of water welling up to everlasting life there is a beer lahai roy in your own experience as a christian god has given you to drink the living water that is in jesus himself and as you've come to drink of that living water that is in jesus himself that you find such a well and such a spring and such a refreshment to your soul so you're able to say of that the way hager said of this literal well beer lahai roy the well of the living one who sees me what a great testimony that is every one of us needs a beer lahai roy in our life's experience

and it's a well we go back to and it's there in us all the time that's why jesus said whoever drinks the water that i shall give shall never thirst but it shall be in him you don't have to go outside of yourself as a christian in order to drink from this well god has placed it in you he lives in you himself and the beer lahai roy of your life and my life is the god in christ and through his spirit who has come to make a home in our very souls yes there's family tension there are things in that home that ought not to be there as there are in every home but the biggest factor the most important the most significant factor of all in the passage is god's tender care coming into the wilderness to such a person as hagar coming to find her there coming to look out for her specifically coming to question

her as to why she's there coming to instruct her to go back in order that she can then move forward with her life and coming to hear her own confession of beer lahai roy the well of the living one who sees me who has taken note of me maybe i would imagine that that came from her lips with a sense of wonder the very end of that name be it lie roy the living one who sees me who has found me who took note of me in the wilderness in my plight be it lie roy let's pray gracious god we thank you that your eye is never off us that you always take note of your people and their situations and we lord give thanks that as we ourselves make our way through life so there are many times where you come to find us and where you come to reveal yourself to us once again as the god who cares for us so deeply god who provides for us the living water that is a redemption in christ we bless you lord tonight for your consistency for your care for the way in which you call upon us daily to come and taste of these free life-giving waters of your redemption bless us we pray and all whom we commit to you tonight remember we pray those who have been prayed for here already this evening those who are heavy-hearted with mourning hearts those who are lonely and sad and ill those reaching the end stage of life those lord who have loneliness and depression so many other things to contend with we commit them to you we ask that you bless us now continue with us and pardon our sin for jesus sake amen