

"Glance Backward; Go Forward; Gaze Upward"

Genesis 16

- I. Introduction
 - A. There are two ways we view time: prospectively and retrospectively
 1. We all experience the illusion that time is moving faster as we grow older
 2. Counting time is not nearly as important as making our time count
 - B. In Genesis 16, Hagar is the innocent bystander to Sarai's faithless scheme (see vv. 1-6)
 - C. God asks us questions, not because He doesn't know or can't remember, but as a means of stirring up contemplation that can lead to transformation
- II. Where Have You Come From? (vv. 7-8a) *Identifying Your Past*
 - A. A glance backward to go forward—getting our bearings so we can make progress as we move forward
 - B. As we look back, we will inevitably see man's faithlessness and God's utter faithfulness
 - C. There are three typical perspectives used to answer the question: Where have you come from?
 1. Physically
 2. Emotionally
 3. Medically
 - D. Will you allow God to be the God of where you've come from—allowing Him to use the rubble and pain for good?
 1. As Paul said in Philippians 3:13, "reaching forward to those things which are ahead"
 2. Because Joseph was able to move past his previous difficulties, God used him in great ways (see Genesis 45:4-8)
 3. "There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up" – Thomas Edison
- III. Where Are You Going? (v. 8b) *Contemplating Your Future*
 - A. As humans, we have a history of wanting to know what's going to happen next, both generally and specifically
 1. The Greeks frequently consulted oracles to deliver the message of the gods concerning the future
 2. The Romans had an unusual practice that involved placing a hen in a cage with a large amount of food; if the hen consumed a large amount of the food quickly, it was considered a good omen
 3. God withholds information so we won't be overwhelmed by our knowledge of the future

4. As Solomon stated, “Man can find out nothing that will come after him” (Ecclesiastes 7:14)
 5. However, as born-again believers, we can know what our eternal future holds—eternity in our Father’s house (see John 14:2-4)
 - B. We don’t know what tomorrow holds, but we know that God holds tomorrow; we don’t know what the future holds, but we know that God holds the future
 - C. “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God” –Corrie ten Boom
 - D. The Angel of the Lord promised Hagar that her descendants would be multiplied
 - E. Who is the Angel of the Lord?
 1. He used the same language and authority that the Lord used in Genesis 17:2
 2. Hagar said that she saw the Lord (see Genesis 16:13)
 3. The Angel of the Lord also appeared to Abraham (see Genesis 22:11-18), Moses (see Exodus 3:2-22), Balaam (see Numbers 22:22-38), Joshua (see Joshua 5:13-15), and Gideon (see Judges 6:11-23)
 4. The Angel of the Lord does not appear after the birth of Jesus
- IV. What Can You Expect? (vv. 9-14) *Believing Your God*
- A. You can expect that God will be with you; there is nothing in the coming year that God will not see or hear
 1. He is present (see v. 10)
 2. He hears (see v. 11)
 3. He sees (see v. 13)
 - B. You can expect God will be honest and plainspoken with you
 1. He told Hagar that her son would “be a wild man” (v. 12)
 2. The Bible is very honest; God’s Word will comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable
 - C. You can expect that God will command you
 1. The Angel of the Lord commanded Hagar to “return to [her] mistress, and submit” to Sarai (v. 9)
 2. He commanded that she call her son’s name Ishmael (see v. 11)
 3. You will not experience the presence of God fully if you don’t obey His commands (see Deuteronomy 4:29; John 14:23-24)
 - D. You can expect that God will bless you
 1. The Lord promised that He would “multiply [Hagar’s] descendants exceedingly” (v. 10)
 2. God will bless you “exceedingly abundantly” (Ephesians 3:20)
- V. Conclusion
- A. Identify your past, contemplate your future, and have faith that God will be with you
 - B. God is good, all the time; all the time, God is good

Figures referenced: Thomas Edison; Corrie ten Boom

Cross references: Genesis 17:2; 22:11-18; 45:4-8; Exodus 3:2-4; Numbers 22:22-38; Deuteronomy 4:29; Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 6:11-23; Ecclesiastes 7:14; John 14:2-4, 23-24; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 3:13-14

Topic: time

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