

BFF440 The God Who Sees

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith and Family" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I'm well. How are you?

Scott: I'm cold.

Steve: We had our Annual Men's Retreat in St. Louis this past weekend.

Scott: How was it?

Steve: It was nice. A whole bunch of the original guys couldn't come. However we had four guys that had never been there before. We had a good group

Did you notice the winter storm named after me?

Scott: I did not. It was named after you?

Steve: Storm Demi, but it was spelled D-E-M-I, like somebody's first name. I thought that was providential. As a result I had to come back a day early, which was OK. My neighbor shoveled me out. Bless his heart.

I was trying to get my energy up about going out and shoveling the driveway and peeked out the door, and here it was already done.

Scott: Wow. That's awesome. Good neighbors.

Steve: They're great neighbors. We had some interesting texts going back and forth. I thanked him.

Scott: How's Sandy doing?

Steve: Same. Struggling. We are caring for her sister. It's draining the life out of her. Physically, her first surgery on her cataract went well. The second one is tomorrow. Hopefully, in a week, she can go back in and get some new glasses that will fit her new and improved eyes.

Scott: It's always something.

Steve: Tough keeping these bodies with the original equipment.

Scott: Yes. I feel that.

Steve: One of the guys that went with me, said, "I have been trying to see my family." What he said was I think he used words like, "I'm trying to have the eyes of God or be the eyes of God and see my family." When he comes home, he doesn't just smile and do his thing, while everybody else is doing their thing, but he intentionally gets right in front of his children, right in front of his wife, each one individually. He sees them. It's been transformative.

That thought was probably my chief takeaway the whole time. I didn't even need to go. For me, I thought of how important it is to be seen. When you bring God into the picture, there's a lot in the Bible about God seeing.

Let's pray. Father, thank You that You see us. You know us. You hear us. You're with us. Lots of different expressions of Your character. Today, help us to comprehend in a deeper way the fact that You see us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: The first time that we really read something like this in the Bible is with Hagar, Sarah's servant. God had made a promise to Abraham. Apparently it was too slow in coming. Sarah said, "Why don't you take my servant Hagar?" Things didn't go well. Sarah kicked her out. Abraham was distraught, but God said to him, "Listen to Sarai." Hagar runs away before she had her son, Ishmael, which she later did. In Genesis 16, she was at the end of her rope. God saw her. I'm going to read Genesis 16 to get the context.

"The angel of the Lord said to her, 'Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael because the Lord has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.'

She called the name of the Lord Who spoke to her, 'You are a God of seeing.' For she said, 'Truly here, I have seen Him Who looks after me.' Therefore, the well was called Beer-lahai-roi."

Most people are familiar with this account in Genesis 16. You can read it to refresh your sense of it. She called the name of Jehovah Who spoke to her, "You are El Roi," which means the God Who sees. El is God. Roi is sees.

Hold that thought because Roi is a participle, whereas the root of it is ra'ah. You hear the R in there and the A. "You are the God Who sees. You are El Roi."

"The name of that place is now called Beer-lahai-roi." Not Roy but Ro-wee, which means the well. Beer means well. Beersheba, etc. Every time you see B-E-E-R, don't think Budweiser. It's Be-er. It's the well. "The well of the living one who sees me." That's a powerful name. The well of the living one who sees me.

Hagar encountered the living God Who sees her. She got courage. She went back. She submitted herself to Sarai, Sarah. God did fulfill His word to Ishmael. He became the head of the Ishmaelites, which we read all about in the Bible.

I'd like to look at that word Ra'ah which means to see. This word is used many times in the Bible. Over a thousand times. It's normally rendered something to do with seeing or looking. See, sees, saw, seen comprise almost nine hundred times.

Look and looked are another 130 times. This word, see, is really important. I want to explain it a little bit here. I'm going to go through it backwards. Genesis 22. Put on your Hebrew hat today because this is really good stuff. It's going to mess up your Sunday school understanding. I'm warning you ahead of time.

Genesis 22, "God tested Abraham and said to him, 'Abraham,' He said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering.'" We know what that means because we know the story, the account. It's not a story. It actually happened.

This name of this mountain means seen, R-I-A-H is from, ra'ah, and Yahweh, which is God's name. Moriah, means God sees, just like El Roi, Moriah, the name of the

mountain where Isaac was to be potentially offered up as a burnt offering. I'm going to keep reading here.

In the ninth verse, "When they came to the place of which God had told him, 'Abraham built the altar.'" You know what happens then. "Then after God provides the ram," Genesis 22:14, "Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah will see, as it is said to this day, on the Mount Of Jehovah, it shall be seen."

" Then when Solomon built the temple," it says in 2 Chronicles 3, "Solomon began to build the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where Jehovah had appeared to his father David." If you remember, when the angel was striking down the people in Jerusalem, he stopped over the threshing floor of Ornan. Right there, David bought that. He began to build the temple.

Isn't that fascinating? Moriah is where Abraham had Isaac lying on the sticks. God provided a ram. Abraham called it Jehovah will see.

Then Solomon, the exact same place where David had set up the temple, he built the temple, the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem. Deuteronomy 11:2 says, "A land which Jehovah your God cares for, for the eyes of Jehovah your God are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

This is a place, Moriah. This is a place where seen of Yahweh. That's what it means.

Now if I was to go into your Sunday school rooms, I would say most of us have, at some point, the names of God. We have Jehovah Nissi. We have Jehovah Jireh. I would say that might be the one the number one names. If you ask people what is the name of God that you like the best, they would say Jehovah Jireh. The Lord will provide.

I think the definition of Jehovah Jireh is "Yahweh sees." This is what it really means. Of the 1,306 times the word **ra'ah** is used, it's translated predominantly to see or to look. . I mean, I can't do them. Five times out of 1,306 it's translated provide. It shouldn't be. The word is **ra'ah**, which means to see.

Consider how the word "provide" appears in 1 Samuel 16:1. "Jehovah said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?' 'Fill your horn with oil. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have **seen** for myself a king among his sons.'"

That's what it should say, but most modern translations say, "I **provided** for myself a king," but **see** works. Even the NASB doesn't translate it provided. It says, "I have selected for myself a king."

Note how many times the word (**ra'ah**) appears. 1 Samuel 16:6–7, "Then when they entered he saw (**ra'ah**) Eliab and thought, 'Surely, Jehovah's anointed is before him.' Jehovah said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature because I have rejected him, for Jehovah sees (**ra'ah**) not as a man sees (**ra'ah**)."

"Man sees (**ra'ah**) on the outward, but Jehovah, sees/looks (**ra'ah**) looks on the heart." That is five times in two verses, and the word **ra'ah**, is translated to see or to look.

Then in 1 Samuel 16:17, "Saul said to his servants, 'Provide for me a man who can play well and bring to me,'" but this could easily be translated "select" for me, or "see for me," because when you see for me, you take care of things.

The first time **ra'ah** is translated **provide** in the life of Abraham. Genesis 22:8, "God will **provide** for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." I think it should read, "God will **see (ra'ah)** for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." Which is how I translate it.

Ra'ah appears a few verses later in Genesis 22:16–17, "Abraham lifted up his eyes and **saw (ra'ah)** behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. Abraham went and took the ram, offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his sons. Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah will **see**, as it is said on this day on the Mount Of Jehovah, it shall be **seen**."

I don't know how else to say it, but there are a whole bunch of times when **ra'ah** is translated "see" in both of these chapters, and then all of a sudden the translators shift gears, and choose the word **provide**. I think it gives a false narrative because it's enough that God **sees**.

That's what Hagar found out. That's what Abraham found out. That's what Samuel found out. For God to **see** is all we need. God is God. He will take care of things. I feel like we put God in this little box. "Oh, no. You're Jehovah Jireh. You said You'd provide." No. It's enough that God **sees**.

On our thirty–fifth wedding anniversary Sandi and I were on Mackinac Island. The first day, we rented bikes. This little island doesn't have any cars. It's horse–drawn wagons, carriages, and a lot of bicycles. There might be one emergency medical vehicle that's a car.

You have to get a ferry to get to this island which is about four and a half miles around it as I remember. There's a little road which is sea level and flat. The first day, we rode bikes. We went to shops. We had a really special time.

By day two and three, Sandi would rather continue shopping. I'd rather not. We're comfortable in our own uniqueness. While she shopped I spent a bunch of time at the fort talking to an interpreter and learning about the history. Really interesting. Then when I was done, I saw a little Episcopal church. It was being renovated.

I asked if I could go in. I quietly sat in this 1800s–built chapel. It was special. I read a verse on the wall, "Jehovah is in His holy temple." It's from the minor prophets, and also in Psalm 11:4. "Jehovah is in His holy temple. Jehovah's throne is in heaven. His eyes see."

I felt as I was sitting there in that pew that God saw me. I can't tell you what that did for me to sense that the eyes of God were on me. His eyes see. I just sat there reveling in that awareness that I was seen. It's so powerful to be seen, not just by humans, not just by well–meaning dads and spouses and children, but to be seen by the Almighty.

In 2012, during one of the hardest days of my life. I got in my car. I felt completely alone. I didn't know what to do. I looked up through the moonroof of my old Volvo I

was driving. This verse went through my mind. "To this man will I look, he that is of a poor and contrite spirit and that trembles at My word." (Isaiah 66:2)

I sensed that God was looking at me. That was enough. Life got harder from that point. The next two months were extremely difficult. I never want to go through that kind of pain again. However, it began with God looking at me.

God sees us. He especially sees us in our affliction just like He saw Hagar in her affliction. Just like He saw Abraham during one of the hardest days of his life. This is enough. God sees.

If you want a practical application, I have consciously been more intentional about seeing people ever since. I want to make them know that they are seen because this is a characteristic of God. God sees us.

If God sees us, we need to see each other. I didn't give you much breathing space there, Scott. What do you think?

Scott: I was trying to think of passages where Jesus saw people and the first one that came to mind is the woman at the well. She goes away from that encounter telling everyone, "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did." He clearly saw her in a different light than anyone else did and in a different way.

That's the best insight I've got, I think. I'm not sure how to practically apply that with my family, but I'll let that bake my noodle for a while and figure it out.

Steve: That's an excellent illustration, because this was a woman, as I've heard it explained, that had to go get water in the middle of the day when nobody else was there. She'd been married so many times, she may not have had the best reputation. Then the son of God sits down to her and sees her. He knew her. That's what bakes her noodle.

"Come, hear this man who has just told me everything about me. He knows me. He's seen me." That's beautiful. Thank you.

Well, I don't want to get into the Hebrew too much, but I think it's really important because this was one of the first things I ever discovered when I learned how to start looking at the original language using this resource that is near and dear to my heart, Bible Hub.

Steve: I looked at how many times this word see was used in the Bible. As I looked, I'm going to give you the actual count. It's used 1,306 times in the Bible, and only five of those are translated provide. I hope that I made the case it doesn't have to be provide.

When God sees, it's enough. Discovering this for myself gave me so much confidence. I thought, "Wow. How do translators miss this? How do we squeeze what clearly reads "see" in to provide?" Perhaps we are attached to the Lord will provide. We count on that. Many people have prayed saying, "You said You'd provide," but it's enough that God sees. That's my point.

What I didn't know, after studying this for a couple of years, was that Hagar had named him El Roi, the God Who sees. She named the well, the well of the living one

who sees me. This is something we can all bank on. God sees us. He's alive. That's all we need.

Father, thank You for seeing us. Thank You for being the living one who sees us. Now help us to see You and to see each other. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith and Family podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve@sbdemmeatgmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.