

**TAKING GOD'S MATTERS  
INTO OUR OWN HANDS**  
**Genesis 16**

## INTRODUCTION

Abraham's development of faith has been a valuable study. His growth has not always been steady, even seems to be regressing at times. The father of our faith was not perfect! But God has always come through, with mercy, patience, and grace.

Again, in Genesis 16 Abram's faith wavers. Not waiting for God's promised son to be born to Sarai in God's way and God's time, Abram sires a child by Sarai's handmaid, Hagar. Ishmael is born. But the Lord knows and hears and sees.

## DIGGING DEEPER

Read Genesis 16 several times. We will observe what happens when Abram and Sarai try to "help God out" in fulfilling His promise of a son to carry on Abram's name. Taking control of God's plan or timing results in lasting problems. Let's learn from Abram about some valuable lessons of waiting on the Lord!

*Pray for wisdom and understanding, and let's begin.*

I. Verses 1-3. Let's help God fulfill His plans. The clock is ticking. Waiting for over 10 years, Abram and Sarai think God's word to them isn't going to pass. The Lord is even restraining this promise from being fulfilled. Not resting God's word, they decide to "help God out". Getting ahead of God's time is always not going to end well.

II. Verses 4-6. Drama and conflict develops in the home as a result. Can you believe that Abram is such a knucklehead? Because of his impulsiveness, now Sarai blames Abram, he defends himself, and Hagar (the innocent party) is hurt. God knows they are messed up (like us), but are a work in process (like us). Yet Abram still is useful in His plan (like us too!). Amazing, huh? But all this conflict could have been avoided if they had simply **WAITED**. *Selah*.

**Let's stop here a moment.** In our culture, waiting is such a hard thing to do. We want things now! Satan tries to get you impatient continually. But what does the Lord say to us about waiting? Meditate on *Psalms 25:3-5; 27:14; 37:5-7 & 34; 40:1-2; 46:10; 62:5-8*. Also consider *Isaiah 26:3-4; 40:31; 30:18; Lamentations 3:25-26; Habakkuk 2:3* Has God promised something that's not happened yet? Are you hindering Him from accomplishing it? How should you react?

III. Verses 7-9. The Angel of the Lord comes to Hagar. Another Christophany. Jesus comes to Hagar in her hurt. He knows where she is and what's happening in her life. And *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*.

IV. Verses 10-12. The Lord hears & cares for Ishmael. Ishmael means "God hears". God certainly loves Ishmael and will bless him, but the covenant is for Abram & Sarai's child yet to be born. We see the result of trying to accomplish spiritual ends through carnal means in the constant conflict between these brothers, continuing from Genesis into our present day! There are consequences from being in a hurry and not waiting for God's timing in directing our lives.

V. Verses 13-16. The God Who Sees. Hagar returned to Abram and Sarai, and gives birth to her son, Ishmael. She had seen God and knew He would care for her. It's awesome to hear the Lord Himself say "I see, I know, don't worry."

**CONSIDER .....** The God Who Sees – El Roi – wants us to think about faith, patience, and waiting. **Read Isaiah 64:4.**

Why would God take so many years to bring His good promises to pass? What's the value in our waiting?

- First, know God's delays are designed. He does know what He is doing, doesn't He? **Rest in His timing.**
- By waiting, we know He is great. He gets the honor and glory as we learn to wait for His time. **He is fully capable.**
- Only by waiting can He produce the fruit of patience in us that glorifies Him greatly. **Relax, he is not late.**

**Has God kept you waiting? Blessed are you! Whenever we wait, it's well worth it!**

## PRAY

- Upcoming events – NE Pastor's Conference 9/26-28, Shepherd School 10/24-11/4
- Prayer ministry – Church Sunday evenings, Women's Tuesday, Men's Saturday, During church services in prayer room
- Church Bible studies – Foundations Class, Inductive Bible Study Class, Women's Bible Study, Home Fellowships
- Local outreaches & ministries – Street Evangelism, Barn Blessing 10/8, St. John in Exile 10/14 & 15,
- Peru mission – Pastor Brian & Betty VanderKodde. Pastor Brian will be sharing next Wednesday evening.