

Taking Things Into His Own Hands (Part 2)

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Preacher: Willard Lyons

[0 : 00] We're going to finish up at chapter 16, but there's some things in this we can see really! that gives us great opportunity as we're in the Christmas season to get into a little bit of that as we see what we need to see in here.

So, we'll look at that and we'll get into that. Now, in the last session that we had in verse number 11 of chapter 16 of Genesis, Scripture said, The angel of the Lord, or that's the messenger of the Lord, said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

Now, in verse 12, now remember, he tells her what type of man he'll be. He will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man, every man's hand against him.

He shall dwell in the presence, or literally dwell to the east of all of his brethren. So, it's good news he's going to have a son. He's going to be a son of Abram, but it's not best news as to what type of man he's going to turn out to be, what his character is going to be.

We have to recognize in that, that this stems from, again, Abram's impatience. It's been 10 years since God gave the promise of a son, but no son yet after 10 years.

[1 : 44] The marvelous thing that we see in this that we've got to really kind of grasp through all of this study is the idea of time. God being eternal is never in a hurry. Amen?

Never in a hurry like we are. It took Abram 10 years to get to this point, 10 years from the time God gave him that promise.

All right? Now, again, remember, Sarai is the one that takes the initiative here and says, Take my handmaiden, Hagar, and by her, I can then maybe have a son.

And that idea was for the continuance of the covenant relationship he has with God and all the promises that pertain to that. Now, so he takes advantage of that.

She gets pregnant. We'll have a son now, as God says, and we'll call his name Ishmael, but this will not be the son of the covenant. Remember, last week we looked at the traditional thing there, in that the concubines can serve as a type of wife, but not with the full advantages of a wife.

[3 : 00] Nor will that child that that concubine bears be part of the family that will inherit part of the father's wealth or whatever, unless the father himself stipifies that he will be.

So there's the stipulation there. Ishmael will not be a part of that covenant relationship. So it's the impatience here of Abram that's causing a problem.

Because of the type of man God says this will be. And you and I recognize where that's at today. All of the conflict that we see between Israel and the Arab people stems from that impatience of Abram.

All right. Now, I want us to look at that. I want us to consider that about our own impatience while we move on here. Now, consider this with me, if you will. Abram began his journey into Canaan. Now, you can write these down if you want to. In 1907 B.C. All right. That's when he began his journey to go into Haran. Leaves his family home, goes to Haran.

[4 : 14] And then in 1892, he then, after Tara dies, remember, 1892 B.C., he goes on into Canaan. And we see the scripture of Genesis 12, 1 through 3, the promises there that have been given to Abram.

And so now, 10 years later, Abram is brought into a covenant relationship with God. Isaac, now, we haven't seen this yet, but we will when we come back to this.

Isaac is born to Abram in 1868 B.C. Jacob and Esau, born to Isaac in 1807 B.C. Now, Abram dies in 1792 B.C.

Now, from the time of God giving promises to Abram in Genesis 12 to the death of Abraham, we have 100 years.

So you see, 100 years of time. Now, something to go along with that in what we're looking at here is Malachi's prophecy. All right. The date of Malachi's prophecies range from 445 B.C. to 425 B.C. [5 : 32] So you see the great length of time span there in the difference between the time Abram dies in 1792 B.C. and the time of Malachi's prophecy.

So here's what I want to get at here. 1,367 years from the death of Abram and the closing of Malachi's prophecies.

All right. So you see there, the 1,367 years there. Now, you add 400 years to that between the prophecy of Malachi and the beginning of the New Testament record.

And Luke chapter 1 gives us 1,767 years. That passes from Abram's death to the events of Malachi. Now, that means there's 1,867 years from the giving of the promise in Genesis 12 to the end of Malachi.

That is a lot of time. All right. A lot of time. Now, with that in mind, you realize numerous generations have come and gone on all of that.

[6 : 49] And so you have to wonder how in the world in all that time, especially in that 400 year stretch, did the promises of God continue in the heart and mind of his people, Israel?

All right. But take a look, if you will, with me. Go with me to Luke chapter 1. Luke chapter 1. Keeping in mind now that where we come to here is after that almost 1900 year period of time, plus that 400 year period of time at the end of Malachi, we have no record or indication that God gives any kind of manifestation of himself, of any word from him to the covenant nation of Israel.

All right. I don't know about you. But if I were to live 400 years, I'd forget a lot of things. Amen.

Yeah. Much less a nation continuing that prophetic reality in their mind of what is supposed to come. But Luke chapter 1 not only gives us an entrance into the Christmas events, but speaks to us here about some great things that take place.

Take note with me in Luke chapter 1, beginning of verse 5. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abiah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

[8 : 29] And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. And they had no children, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

And it came to pass that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. Now, you realize the reason why for the fear. It's not just that he was startled at seeing this messenger of God, but throughout the Old Testament in particular, a lot of the time, when an angel or a messenger of God of some type appeared to them and spoke with them, it was for judgment.

It was for a message of judgment. So a lot of times, they were fearful of the reality of that happening. No doubt that's what takes place here with Zacharias. But verse 13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard.

[9 : 52] And thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall return to the Lord their God.

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, or Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answered, said, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.

And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple.

[11 : 08] When he came out, he couldn't speak unto them. And they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned unto them and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

And after these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men.

Now, tremendous picture here. Set the tone for that. This is a period of time, according to Ezekiel, when God's people were rebellious.

They were an ungodly people. Their lifestyle, as well as their worship, was corrupt because of their sin. So there wasn't a good happy time in the nation of Israel.

Also pictured in Ezekiel's prophecy is the idea of God departing from his temple, no longer being present in his temple with his people.

[12 : 13] He says to them, The thing that you will be looking toward is captivity, being out of your land, becoming servants to a foreign country.

But God does do something there as well. Turn over with me to Ezekiel chapter 16, and look what else he says here. All right? Ezekiel chapter 16, in verse 60 and following.

Prior to verse 60, he's talking about this very thing of the ungodliness and sin of the nation of Israel and how he's going to deal with that. But he picks up in verse number 60 and says, Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

Then thou shalt remember thy ways and be ashamed when thou shalt receive thy sisters and thine elder and thy younger, and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by the covenant.

I will establish my covenant with thee. Thou shalt know that I am Jehovah, that thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth anymore because of thy shame when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.

[13 : 37] Now, God promises a reconciliation here, a restoration, if you will, to the nation of Israel. Now, with that in mind, run to Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi's prophecy.

And let's remember what he says there. Chapter 4. He says, Verse 1, For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Son of Righteousness, notice it's S-U-N, shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves to the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet. In the day that I shall do this, saith Jehovah of hosts, remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel with statutes and judgments.

Now, Verse 5, Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah.

[15 : 00] He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Now, after all the judgment that God's going to bring upon the covenant nation, he promises a restoration, and promises a true blessing here.

He's going to send a messenger. All right? He calls him one that will be Elijah the prophet. Now, ever since that time, that's what Israel looked for.

You recall when John the Baptist started baptizing the River Jordan. They wondered who he was. They caught the message that he was preaching.

He turned out to be that one that is in the spirit of Elijah the prophet that was the forerunner of the Christ that was coming in his day. Now, 400 years of silence at the end of Malachi, plus all those other, almost 1,900 years of time, recognize what happens here.

Here's a lowly priest, right? Disordinary, common, everyday priest. serving in his capacity in the temple.

[16 : 21] Remember, the priesthood was arranged into what's called 24 courses or units of priests. Each unit or course had a specific role that was appointed to them each week to perform.

They would perform that same task every day of the week. All right? At this particular point, Zacharias, whose wife was barren, by the way, remember, it's important for us, was now appointed,

had cast lots, and he was chosen to perform the task of serving at the altar of incense. Of all the tasks within the temple, the most coveted was to serve in that capacity because the altar of incense represented the rising up of the prayers of the people of God into the nostrils of God. So that was a cherished thing. Many of the priests never in all their life as a priest never got to serve in that capacity. So it's a rare thing for them to be able to do that among all the priests. But here, Zacharias did. And as he was there serving in that capacity, the smoke and odor of the incense that he spread on those coals rose up into the nostrils of God representing the prayers of the people.

[17 : 53] And, by the way, all the people of Israel were outside watching what's going on to hear what's going on inside. All right? I'm just guessing they could smell the aroma of the incense and rejoicing because of what's happening there.

But take note with me if you will. Here this lowly servant in his daily task now has something take place. Again, notice what happens here.

The angel of God, Gabriel by name, stands at the right hand or the right end of that altar of incense. And he has a message for Zacharias.

Twofold. First of all, as Zacharias, who had been praying for his wife, the angel said, God has heard your prayer and has honored it.

Your wife is going to conceive and she will bear a son. That had to be great news for Zacharias. All right? But notice what else he says here.

[19 : 02] In verse 15, he shall be great in the sight of the Lord. Drink neither wine nor strong drink. In other words, the Nazarene vow.

He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. Many of the children of Israel shall return to the Lord their God.

Verse 17, he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias. All right? To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and disobedient to the wisdom of the just to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Got to believe that the moment Zacharias hears that, he knows what he's saying. This son that's going to be born to you and Elizabeth is going to be that one that God has chosen to be the forerunner for the Christ.

The promised redeemer for his people. Yeah. Could you imagine the thoughts and feelings that Zacharias must have had at that point?

[20 : 22] Now, dumbfounded, no doubt, because look what happens. Zacharias said to the angel, where shall I know this?

How am I going to know this is going to happen? I'm an old man. My wife is, he didn't say an old woman. He had tact here. She's well stricken in years.

All right? Now, God took that as unbelief in the heart of Zacharias. So what did he say? He said, all right, you're going to be dumb, not up here, but you're going to be unable to speak until this thing takes place.

All right? Elizabeth, and so that's what happens. People are wondering, where in the world is he? This shouldn't take this long. They think perhaps he died. What do you do when the priest dies in the holy place?

But all of a sudden he comes out and he can't speak. He has to motion his intents to the people with his hands. They think he saw a vision.

[21 : 27] All right? But not so. All right. Elizabeth now is with child. Bible says she goes and hides herself five months.

I don't know why. No speculation here. All right? But notice something that happens here. Gabriel told Zacharias when that boy is born, you're going to call his name John.

Now, John is an interesting word here. All right? It's a word that denotes the idea of the grace of God. It literally, the original name is Jehochanan.

All right? Jehochanan. Combination of two words Yahweh and Canaan. All right? So it's Jehochanan. That simply means the grace or mercy of Yahweh.

That's what this boy is going to be called. What a picture here. What an appropriate name for the one that is now going to usher in the coming of the promised Redeemer that Israel had looked for for over 1,800 years.

[22 : 43] Yeah. He's just about here is the picture. Now, notice what happened. She gave birth to that son.

All right? She gave praise to the Lord in verse 25. Go to verse 57. All right? Verse 57, Luke 1. Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered.

She brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child and they called him, the people called him Zacharias after the name of his father or Zacharias Jr.

Amen? But notice something here. His mother answered, Not so. Uh-uh. No. His name shall be called John.

Now that's confusing because there was nobody in their family called John. Evidently in those days it was not traditional to name somebody after somebody that's not in your family.

[23 : 59] Now, they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father. How would he have him called? And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote saying, His name is John.

Jehochanan. John. And they marveled at it all. Now look at the next verse. His mouth was opened immediately and his tongue loosed and he spake and praised God.

Fear came upon all that dwelt round about them and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea. All they that heard them laid up in their hearts saying, What manner of child?

Now catch this. What manner of child shall this be? The hand of the Lord was then upon him. Now, what manner of man is going to be?

Tell you what he's going to be. He's going to dress in camel skins and eat locusts and wild honeys down out in the middle of River Jordan and say, Repent or else. Yeah. Yeah. That's what he's going to be.

[25 : 10] All right. Now, And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

Literally, he laid down the ransom price for his people. He knows what he's doing. He knows what God's leading to here.

It's not just that his son is going to be that one, but his son is going to be the one that will lead the way, prepare the way for that anointed one, for that promised one.

And it's that promised one who will lay down himself as a ransom to redeem lost mankind.

Zacharias sees that here and gives praise to the Lord.

1900 years almost has passed since that promise. But now to that lowly seemingly insignificant priest was heralded the reality not only that the Christ is coming but his son would be his forerunner.

[26 : 15] Now he hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant the oath which he swore to our father Abraham that he would grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.

not only does Zacharias see the reality of the redeemer coming but he saw what the redemption that ransom price would result in Israel knowing God following him in righteousness and holiness yeah amen yeah that's patience waiting almost 1900 years for it to happen now all of a sudden that's taking place God calls to you and I in this day of grace as well as the people of Israel to be patient in waiting upon the Lord in 2nd Thessalonians chapter 3 God said the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ be patient he's coming James chapter 5 verses 7 through 8 say be patient therefore brethren unto the coming of the Lord behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it until he receiveth the early and latter rain be also patient establish your heart for the coming of the Lord draws nigh what a picture he gives us here yeah how many farmers or ex-farmers part-time farmers how many gardeners do we have yeah I got a few all right yeah you go out what's the first thing you do you get the soil ready right yeah get it all ready then what do you do you sow the seed you plant then what do you do the farmer prays for rain and that's the idea of the first and the latter rains all

right two rain seasons basically in Palestine used to be anyway at the time of the writings the first one was in mid-November the fall rain and that came right after the planting time all right you plant that seed into the soil and they prayed for rain and it rained at the right time to get those seeds starting in the germination process and then for a long time then there was no rain but the process continued until the time when it was almost time for harvest then the second rain would come and they would rejoice in that second rain because that second rain would cause those crops that had already come up to fill out better and put on the best fruit all right and that's the picture that he's painting for us here be patient be like that farmer that does his work and prays for the God to give the rain that is necessary because God has promised to give that rain if you will in Deuteronomy chapter 11 verse number 14

I will give you the rain of your land in due season the first rain and the latter rain that thou mayest gather in thy corn and thy wine and thine oil all right now in Zechariah chapter 10 verse 1 he tells them you got to pray as well ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain so shall the Lord make bright clouds and give them showers of rain to everyone grass in the field all right so great picture there of our being patient and waiting upon the Lord Philippians chapter 4 verses 5 through 7 we've seen this before but let me read it again as we amplify maybe this will behave itself let all men know and perceive and recognize your unselfishness all right that is your considerateness and forbearing spirit the Lord is near that is he's coming soon do not fret or have any anxiety about anything but in every circumstance and in everything by prayer petition with thanksgiving continue to make your wants known to God and

God's peace that transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and mind in Christ and on down he goes to us in the things that we are to be patient for and how to be patient being patient to wait upon God now when you're going along you have certain circumstances that arise and give you anxiety and you want God to do something just remember this Israel waited almost 1900 years all right again R.G.

Lee didn't say payday is always on the 1st and the 15th it takes time it's God's timing and his timing is always perfect just be patient and wait upon God now back in Genesis 16 quickly one other thing to look at here this is Hagar that has been met by the messenger of God and so in verse 13 and 14 scripture says so she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her you are a God of seeing for she said have I not even here in the wilderness looked upon him who sees me and lived or have I here also seen the future purposes or designs of him who sees me therefore the well was called Berli Roi a well to the living one who sees me it is between Kadesh and Bered now let me ask you this she's perplexed here but gladly she said

[33 : 01] I have seen God and I'm still alive how is that possible take note all the times in this series of verses dealing with Hagar it's always the angel of God speaking to her the angel or the messenger of God in whatever form all right because later on in the book of Exodus you recognize God tells Moses you cannot see me in my glory and live as a human being so it wasn't possible for her to do that but God manifested himself to her through this angel or messenger that had spoken to her on God's behalf all right so there's the picture that you have there don't want you to be confused about that now Hagar in the interim here she gave praise to the Lord by naming that place after the fact that

God did see her and seeing her no doubt he cared for her and he showed her that all right that's why she names that place in that manifestation of God to her at that place verse 15 and 16 Hagar bare Abram a son and Abram called his son's name which Hagar bore Ishmael and Abram was four score and six years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram all right now having returned then as God reconstructed her having returned to Abram's house she bore him a son while he was 86 years old and no doubt conversing with him about what God told her he named him Ishmael as God had instructed her all right baby even thought about him as the promised seed until 13 years later when another confrontation with God comes with

Abram and Isaac results another 13 year wait let's pray father again thank you for your loving kindness and your goodness and grace today and again lord we thank you for your provision that you give to us that's always in line with what your design is in the larger scheme of things so father we thank you for that and ask you to make us keenly aware of the reality that you know us you manifest yourself to us by the things you do in our lives and give us a keen sense again of the fact that you are using our lives to whatever degree and in whatever manner you want to to accomplish whatever those purposes and designs through us are that always play a part in the grander scheme

of things that you have designed so father enable us to see that to live in that and to then just submit to you in it all as we let you accomplish those purposes through us again thank you for these precious folks thank you for their love for you and your word and pray your continued blessing upon them and we'll thank you for it praise you for it in Jesus name amen
Thank you.