

# Taking Things Into His Own Hands (Part 1)

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[ 0 : 00 ] In the last part of chapter 15, verses 18-21, remember what happened here.

Now, you have to go to a special class in seminary to learn words like that.

All right. So I probably got them wrong anyway. All right. So God has made, remember, made the covenant with Abram, promising the land for his descendants, for his lineal descendants, if you will, that he spoke of in chapter 15.

And so that brings us now to chapter 16. We're going to find out in just a minute. At the beginning of chapter 16, it's been 10 years since Abram entered into Canaan.

And with all the promises that God has given him, all focused on the idea, we're surrounded in the idea of him having a son for whom those covenant promises can continue.

[ 1 : 42 ] All right. In that period from the end of chapter 15, when God enters that covenant with Abram to the beginning of chapter 16, the things that transpire there, there's no record given of any dialogue between God and Abram like we've been seeing in these first three or four chapters that we've been in.

All right. All right. From chapter 11, I guess, to chapter 15. So no picture, no record of a dialogue.

Now, that's not saying there hasn't been. But if there has been, God did not seem pleased to record that for us, to let us know what he said.

So keep that in mind as we think about what transpires here as we begin chapter 16. So verses 1 and 2 of chapter 16 read this way.

Now, Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children. And she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord that's Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing.

I pray thee, go in unto my maid. It may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened unto the voice of Sarai.

[ 3 : 07 ] So you get the picture here. In 10 years time, Abram reverts back to himself. All right. In this particular case here.

But there's seeming justification in that. We'll see that as we go along. So, even though God had made that covenant with Abram, 10 years after his entrance into Canaan, and in that time, a promise of lineal air that would come through Sarai now, all right, did not seem likely after 10 years to be fulfilled.

I mean, after all, how many of you remember what you were like 10 years ago physically? Amen.

Yeah. And so, I'm sure Sarai and Abram were recognizing here, hey, God has made the promise, but it's been 10 years.

And we don't have any children. No son to carry on the covenant promise that was given by God. So, Sarai resolved.

Now, notice here, it's Sarai that takes the initiative here. She resolves to take her handmaiden and bring her into Abram so that perhaps by her, Sarai could have a son.

[ 4 : 31 ] The heir could then carry out the covenant promise. Now, it seemed reasonable then to Abram to do so. And he does.

According to the custom of the East, and we'll look at that here in just a little bit, it seemed okay to Abram to do this. Those of you in my Sunday school class, if you remember a while back, we were studying through the book of Malachi.

Malachi. And remember, the portion in chapter 2, I think it was, where God, speaking through Malachi, rebukes the people of Israel, the men in particular, because they were divorcing their Jewish wives so that they could have freedom to marry Gentile wives that were not part of the nation of Israel.

All right? And so, God, through Malachi, corrects him in that, and said they were using that as an excuse, using Abram as an excuse, you know.

If Abram could do it, why can't we? Because Hagar, Hagar is not, now don't tell me that's right. Mike said it, not me.

[ 5 : 45 ] All right? Hagar was not a Jew. She's a handmaiden. All right? So, Malachi was saying the reason Abram did it was not for the same reason you guys are doing this.

Abram did it in order to carry out the promises of God concerning the covenant. That's the only reason Abram did that.

So, he rebuked him for that and set him straight about that, that he might seek a godly seed, the scripture says in Malachi 2.15. So, he sought that seed or that son in order to preserve the promise of God concerning a coming son.

Now, but once again, once again, they begin to learn here. It'll take a while, but they'll learn that their thoughts were the thoughts of man and not the thoughts of God.

All right? Now, let's think about that a minute. Turn back with me, if you will, to Isaiah. I started to say Isaiah's gospel, but hey, Isaiah chapter 55.

[ 7 : 07 ] Turn there with me just a moment. All right? Isaiah chapter 55. Let's remember something here. Chapter 55 basically is God's message of offering salvation to those in sin.

All right? In verse 3, he said, Incline your ear and come unto me here, and your souls shall live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Verse 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

And let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Now, remember, these are the people of Israel Isaiah is preaching to here.

All right? And so he's inclining them to come back into your faithfulness to God, to Jehovah. And he will hear you, repent of your sins, and he will bring you back into his favor.

[ 8 : 13 ] All right? And look at verse 8, though. And he said, here's the reasoning behind it. Now, with that in mind, remember, the thinking of the Jew was that because they are the lineal seed of Abram, they automatically have favor with God.

So I think that made it easier for them to go into idolatry and all those other things they were doing outside the will of God. But here, God is calling them back to repentance, to the salvation he has to offer.

And the reason being, he says, he said, for my thoughts, in verse 8, my thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts from your thoughts.

All right? Now, those of you in my Sunday school class, Sunday morning, we'll be looking at John 3, 16. And we'll look at this again, all right, and see what God's talking about here.

[ 9 : 25 ] You ever stop to think about how high the heavens are from the earth? Well, we'll mention that Sunday morning. Yeah. So that speaks of, in John 3, 16, the love of God.

But here, it speaks of the thoughts of God. How much difference there is in the thoughts that God has and the thoughts that we have. Now, let's look at some verses concerning that.

In Psalm 94, turn there just a moment, if you will. I'm going to read this out of the Amplified for you. Psalm 94, verse 11.

Very simple verse. The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are vain. That is, they're empty, futile, only a breath.

All right? That's the thoughts of man that are geared by the natural man. Now, over in 1 Corinthians chapter 3.

[ 10 : 28 ] Remember that. 1 Corinthians chapter 3. Look at verse 18. Let no person deceive himself. If anyone among you supposes that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool.

That is, let him discard his worldly discernment and recognize himself as dull, stupid, and foolish, without true learning and scholarship, that he may become really wise.

For this world's wisdom is foolishness. That is, absurdity and stupidity. That is, it's foolish with God. For it is written, he lays hold of the wise in their own craftiness.

And again, the Lord knows the thoughts and reasonings of the humanly wise and recognizes how futile they are. Yeah.

Does that make you feel good? Yeah. Yeah, go back to Proverbs. Proverbs 16, verse 1.

[11:33] The plans of the mind and orderly thinking belong to man. But from the Lord comes the wise answer of the tongue. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes.

But the Lord weighs the spirits. That's the thoughts and intents of the heart. Roll your works upon the Lord. That is, commit and trust them wholly to him.

He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to his will. And so shall your plans be established and succeed. Now, isn't that good?

All right. Just completely submitting ourselves and what we do to the Lord. Seeking his leadership by his spirit.

And God will then cause our thoughts to match the will of God. All right. It doesn't mean God will change his will.

[12:31] But he'll change our thoughts to be in agreement with what his will is. Oh, if we could, as human beings, master that.

Amen. What a difference that would be in our lives. One other thing. And you remember this verse from Philippians chapter 4. Start in verse 6.

Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything. But in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God.

And God's peace shall be yours. That's that tranquil state of soul assured of its salvation through Christ. And so fearing nothing from God and being content with its lot, its earthly lot of whatever sort that is.

That peace. Which transcends all understanding. That shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

[13:37] For the rest, brethren, whatever is true. Whatever is worthy of reverence and is honorable and seemly. Whatever is just.

Whatever is pure. Whatever is lovely and lovable. Whatever is kind and winsome and gracious. If there's any virtue and excellence.

If there's anything worthy of praise. Think on and weigh and take account of these things. That is, fix your minds on them.

It's a good principle for us to try to master, especially in a generation where we're so bombarded from every vantage point, every way by so many things of media.

Amen? Yeah. Yeah. So, our thoughts need to be focused on the thoughts of God. And realizing when we're thinking things, we need to double check and be sure they're thoughts of God and not thoughts of our own.

[14:39] Now, verses 3 through 4 of Genesis 16. Now, this could be very confusing to us.

So, why would God allow this polygamy, all right, to transpire in what God's wanting to do? Here's the custom of the day. Let me just read this to you.

Slave women or bond women were considered both property and legal extensions of their mistress. So, in other words, she owned them, all right?

Being her property, she could do whatever she wants to with them. So, as a result, it would be possible for Sarai to have Hagar perform a variety of household tasks, as well as to use her as a surrogate for her own barren womb.

So, concubines, considered sometimes a secondary wife, did not have the full status of wives, but were girls who came to the marriage with no dowry and whose role included childbearing.

[16:09] But here's the key. Their children may not inherit from the father. In other words, a child would have no claim to any inheritance from the father, unless the father publicly declared him to be an heir, all right?

As a result, concubinage would not be viewed as polygamy. In Israel, as in most of the ancient world, monogamy was generally practiced, but polygamy was not contrary to the law or contemporary moral standards, but was usually not, I love this, was not usually economically feasible.

And all the men said? Yeah. Yeah. So, the main reason for polygamy, then, would be for the first wife to be able to conceive a child through her, because she herself was barren.

And that's the main purpose of that in that day and time. So, women in the ancient world obtained honor through marriage and children. And so, although Hagar was a servant, the fact that she had conceived a child and Sarai had not gave her cause to hold her mistress in contempt.

So, Sarai's reaction in abusing Hagar may be based on both jealousy and class differences. All right? And so, you kind of get the picture there of what happens here.

[17:44] So, now that Sarai is the one who had originated the plan, she was the first one to experience the headache from it all. All right?

Now, all the consequences that she is about to have come to her life over this, it's all because of her own choice in choosing.

All right? Now, Hagar, Scripture says, looks scornfully upon Sarai. All right? Now, ladies, I'm timed not to get myself in trouble here.

All right? But some, in whatever she's doing, Hagar is causing tremendous stress in the heart and mind of Sarai.

I mean, after all, think about this. Think about what happens here. You got nine months to play with here. All right? In that nine months, here is Hagar, the handmaiden, still in the household of Abram, being more and more evident that she's with child.

[18:59] Perhaps even, watch the old adage, strutting her stuff in front of Sarai. You know?

Maybe going through the tent and saying, na-na-na-na-boo-boo, I'm pregnant, you're not, type of thing. You know? Whatever she's doing is causing tremendous stress.

And even, who knows, perhaps even Abram, Abram was showing more affection toward Hagar now, because she is with child, him thinking, this is going to be the child of the covenant, of the covenant promise.

All right? And so, Sarah's having to take a back seat here to all of this to some degree. So, what a tremendous problem she's facing here now.

Hagar may be even thinking of herself being more of a woman than Sarai, because now she's with child, and Sarai's not. All right? A lot of different scenarios, no doubt, in what's taking place here.

[20:07] Now, verses 5 through 6. Don't know how much time elapses here, how many days, weeks, whatever. But Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong not be upon me, but be upon thee, you.

I have given my maid into thy bosom. And when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes.

The Lord judged between me and thee, but Abram said unto Sarai, Hey, she's yours. Do with her what you want.

Yeah. Amen? That's Hebrew. Rendering of the thing here. All right? Yeah. He said, The maid is in thy hand.

Do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt heartily with her, she fled from her face. All right? Now, again, she complains to Abram here.

[21:12] All right? Man, this is all your fault. All right? My wrong now comes upon thee. Insinuated that it's all his fault that she couldn't be a mom.

All right? A mother could have children. So, does anything, gentlemen, does anything come to mind there to you? Scripture-wise.

Genesis. Genesis. Chapter 3. Go back to the Garden of Eden. Verse 8. The Lord's walking in the garden of the cool of the day, and He speaks and says, Where are you guys?

Because Adam and Eve had hid themselves. The Lord called unto him, Where are you? Verse 10.

He said, I heard thy voice in the garden. I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.

Who told thee thou was naked? I think the glory of God had departed from them. They could see each other from sinful eyes. All right? And verse 12.

[22:19] The man said, talking to God, after God said, Who told you that? The woman who thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree to eat. Yeah. Lord, it's the woman you gave me.

And somebody else would say, what do you expect for a rib? All right.

Now, look over, if you will, to verse number 16. God's dealing out the consequences here. Unto the woman, He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception.

In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. And look at the phrase now. And thy desire shall be to thy husband. And he shall rule over thee. One scholar that I read years ago said and explained this to me, that it's just not the fact of the headship of the man over the woman in light here.

But the picture is, she will have the propensity to want to usurp the authority of her husband, of the man over her. So what do we see here?

[23:31] With Abram and Sarai. Again, it's Sarai that takes the initiative in this. All right. We haven't had children. God's promised it.

So, why don't we just do the traditional, customary thing when nothing else works. Take my hand-made Hagar and perhaps have a son by her.

Abram thinks, all right. What a parallel here between Adam and Eve and Sarai and Abram. Yeah? Adam succumbed to Eve.

She gave of him to eat of the tree, so she says. Here, Sarai gives to Abram the handmaid and he accepts it or her.

All right. What a parallel. Both occasions created real problems for them, for all of mankind. All right. [ 24 : 34 ] Now, so, notice what happens here. All right. So, Sarai deals harshly with Hagar.

Don't know what avenue, what she did, but she dealt harshly with her. So, Hagar just leaves. She flees from the face of Sarai. Now, Abram's given her full power to do whatever he wants with Hagar without raising Hagar's son.

All right. That's not part of the bargain here as far as we can tell. So, as soon as Sarai made her feel her power, she flees.

All right. Now, so, instead of reaping the benefits that they thought they would reap by having a son through Hagar so that the covenant relationship can be fulfilled, they ended up with nothing but grief and she lost her handmaiden.

All right. Through their own scheme that they had created here. But notice here, verses 7 and 8, the faithful covenant God turns this whole mess into a blessing.

[ 26 : 01 ] All right. Now, again, I ask why? Why did he bless Hagar and Ishmael? for Abram's sake.

This is going to be Abram's son, not the covenant son, but still the son of Abram. So, God blesses so that his perfect design for and through Abram can and would be realized and accomplished.

Verse 7 and 8, And the angel of Jehovah found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to shore.

And he said, Hagar, Sarah's maid, whence camest thou? In other words, why are you here? Where are you going? Whither goest thou? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarah.

Now, undoubtedly, she attempted was in the idea of returning back to Egypt, from which she came, no doubt, by a road used by travelers every day.

[ 27 : 15 ] All right? Now, again, verse 9 and 10, The angel of Jehovah said unto her, Return to thy mistress and submit thyself unto her hands.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude. So, the angel or the messenger of God, all right, don't think of the little white-winged, I don't know what it was.

The word angel most of the time signifies the idea of the messenger of God, whatever form he desires. All right? Finds Hagar by the well, directed her to go back to Sarai, submit herself to her. But at the same time, he promises her a son. All right? I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

Verse 11, And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

[ 28 : 35 ] All right? Now, is there any other time when God told them to name the child before the child was born? Very rare occasion.

Starts here with Ishmael. All right? Now, she gets the idea here that it's going to be a boy from what God says, because you can name him Ishmael.

All right? Literally means God hears. All right? That's what she shall call him, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

All right? Or, Jehovah has hearkened to your distress. Now, look at verse 12. he tells her what kind of guy he's going to be.

He will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him. He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Or, literally, he will dwell on the, what, the east side of all of his brethren.

[ 29 : 46 ] Now, good news, she's going to have a son. All right? It's going to be a son for Abram. But then, this is kind of the good news, bad news type stuff.

Here's the kind of guy he's going to be. All right? Oh, what happens when we, you know, I think, here's a good picture, come to think of it.

You wonder why God said this to her, determined this is the kind of guy he's going to be. Any time we get in the flesh to do something, it's the flesh governed by the sin nature that will always cause

problems.

All right? Now, Hagar, you're going to have a son, but he's going to be literally the wild ass kind of man. Some translations, a wild donkey of a man, a wild, uncontrollable beast of the field.

He'll be a wanderer. He'll be a vagabond. And that's what they tell us about the vagabonds of the day. All right? Job 39, Job 39, verses 5 through 8 gives us a description of the Arab nomads.

[ 31 : 14 ] And here's what he says. who has sent out the wild ass free? Who has sent out the wild ass free? Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

Whose house I have made the wilderness and the barren land his dwelling? He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he of the crying of the driver.

The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searches after green things. All right? No desire for the city life.

Amen? Just wants to go wild and free and have no constraints placed upon him. Now, his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him.

Continual state of feud between himself, his relatives, others. What does that picture you of here?

[ 32 : 17 ] Now, I know we're living in modern times, and some of this has kind of changed a little bit as far as the Palestinians. All right? The Arabs. All right?

Now, not all the Arabs are Palestinians and so forth, but you get a picture here. Anytime I read that, I think of Yesar Arafat. You remember him?

Pretty boy. Oh, yeah. I'd love to follow him just because of the way he looked. Never could understand that. How could a guy like that get so much control and people follow him?

Well, they're forced to, but, you know. Yeah. He had no homeland. Just a vagabond. Just a wanderer. A Bedouin. All right?

But yet, he wanted, you know, a place to stay. And every country he went to to find a place to stay, they wanted to kick him out.

[ 33 : 15 ] Yeah, still do. All right? Look at Gaza. Look at Hamas. All right? So, that's the kind of man he's going to be.

He will dwell in the presence of all of his brethren. Literally, he'll dwell to the east of all his brethren. All right? Get a picture of that in Genesis 25, verses 12 through 18.

And we'll not take the time to do that tonight. All right? So, Abram's impatience created such strife that we still see in existence today.

And always will be in existence until after the tribulation period and after the millennial reign when God straightens it all out. All right? Now, what's the key for us here?

It doesn't make any difference how long it takes. Amen? Yeah. Patience is the word.

[ 34 : 22 ] Patiently wait upon God. I find it interesting. Of course, you know, 10 years isn't a whole lot of time it was to Abram.

But you remember what the Hebrew writer said about Abram who patiently waited and endured. All right? Looking for a city. So, you know, there's nothing like experience to create a change.

Right? To this extent, it took a second time for Abram to learn some things here. All right? Let's pray.

Father, again, thank you for your loving kindness and your goodness to us today and for the privilege of the time together again tonight. And we pray your blessings upon the things that you've shown us tonight.

Lord, again, I pray that you will just really embed within us the reality that we can trust you to do whatever you said you're going to do.

[ 35 : 27 ] To use us however you want to use us and that it's imperative for us to submit to that and be patient to patiently wait upon you to do what you're going to do in your time frame.

So, Father, teach us that but more so enable us by your grace to carry on that way. And we'll thank you and we'll praise you for what you do now. It's in Jesus' name we pray for his sake.

Amen.