

THE LIFE OF ABARAHAM

5. Abraham Follows Man's Ways

(Leader's Notes)



Introduction

When God called Abraham he gave him some wonderful promises. Abraham believed God, however there were times when he doubted and became impatient for those promises to be fulfilled. Sadly there was a time when Abraham did things his own way, instead of waiting for God's timing. Perhaps we have done that too! There are some important lessons we can learn from Abraham's life.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 15:1-6, 16:1-16

A. ABRAHAM'S DOUBTS THE PROMISE

- ✧ What promise had God given about Abraham's descendants when he first called him? Genesis 12:2-3
(God promised to make him into a great nation.)

- ✧ What was the reason for Abraham's fear? Genesis 15:2-3
(He was afraid that if he had no son, his slave, Eliezer, would become the heir. In those days it was The custom for the slave to become the heir if the couple was childless.)



What did Abraham do when he had these doubts and fears? Genesis 15:2, 8
How do you usually respond when you experience doubts about God's promises? What can you learn from Abraham's example?

B. ABRAHAM TRIES TO FULFIL THE PROMISE

- ✧ How many years was it from the time when God first gave the promise? Compare Genesis 12:4 with Genesis 16:3, 16
(It was between 10 to 11 years.)

- ✧ What does Sarah suggest Abraham do, so the promise would be fulfilled, and why do you think she did that? Genesis 16:2
(Sarah suggests Abraham take the maid and have a child through her. This was allowed according to the customs of the day. It could be written into the marriage contract that a child born to the maid belonged to the couple.)

- ✧ What were the factors that Abraham possibly considered when he made his decision?
*(He had already waited 10 years for God to fulfil his promise.
He was now 85 years old and his wife was 75 years old.
The suggestion came from Sarah herself and it was the practice of the day.)*



With all these factors to consider, do you think Abraham did the right thing? Why or why not? Discuss.
(What Abraham did must have seemed reasonable to him, but it was not God's way, and he was no longer acting in faith.)

- ☆ What was the result or consequence of Abraham's choice? Genesis 16:4-8, 12
(There was disharmony in the household and this continued throughout the generations. Hagar suffered in the end as a result of this action.)



Have you ever tried to work out God's promises in your own life and made a similar mistake to Abraham? What was the result?

Conclusion

God's ways are so different to ours. His ways and timing is always best, although we may not understand or see that at the time. In Isaiah 55:8-9 it says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Abraham learnt the hard way. Perhaps you have done the same thing in your life. Although Abraham had followed his own way, God was still faithful to his promises. He will be with you too, if you turn back and trust him.