

# God's Promise, God's Way, God's Time

## READING

Genesis 16  
Genesis 19  
Jeremiah 2  
Galatians 3,4

*Digging your own well might seem like a bright idea at the time. But a day will come when you will regret it, but will be unable to reverse the damage you have done to yourself, and your descendants.*

In Genesis we read that Yahweh promised Abram (Abraham) a son. But by the time we get to Genesis 16 he hasn't be born, and Sarai (Sarah, Abraham's wife), is getting older but nothing has happened.

She comes to a sudden realisation that God didn't mean directly through her, (since that would be impossible at her age), but he must have meant through her servant, Hagar. So she suggests to her husband that he sleeps with the servant and that way she can have a child through her. And God's promise will be fulfilled that way.

Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.  
I wonder how many times he kicked himself for that day.

That one decision gave rise to all the issues we see in the Middle East today. The Arabs trace their ancestry to Abraham through Ishmael. The Jews obviously trace theirs through Isaac, (the impossible child who was born to Sarah in her old age!).

But because of this, both groups, Arabs and Jews, both consider that they are the rightful heirs of the promise made to Abraham. That the land he was living in, Israel, would be his forever. They both think that God himself gave it to them. No wonder neither of them will give up!

But it's so easy to convince yourself that our idea must be how God is going to fulfil his promise to us. To apply our own logic and our own thinking. And to not have to just keep waiting when it looks so futile, and it looks like God has forgotten the promise he made.

But when we do that... we're wrong.

Later in Genesis we read that Lot's daughters did the same thing. Lot was Abraham's nephew.

They had fled the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were in fact, the only survivors when God sent angels to completely wipe out two cities of sinful, wicked people who lived in rebellion to him.

The two daughters knew that they had an obligation to produce offspring, and to continue their father's lineage. (Although that is more cultural than God commanded)...

And since all the men in both cities were now dead, and they were living in a cave in the mountains. Clearly, God wanted them to have descendants by sleeping with their father. (I guess they never knew what happened to Great Aunt Sarah).

And they knew that their father wouldn't accept this idea, so instead of asking his opinion and advice, they just got him drunk and slept with him without his knowledge.

How did that one go?

Well, they had two boys, Moab, and Ammi. Who became the fathers of the Moabites and Ammonites. Two tribes which would become a thorn in the side of the Jews for generations. You can read about them often in most of the Old Testament history books.

(But God is gracious. Ruth was a Moabite, and she became part of the family lineage of Yeshua!)

Our actions have consequences.

God knows what they will be. That's why he chooses when to fulfil his promises, and how, so they will bring about particular outcomes.

When we interfere with that, we mess things up. Always.

There isn't a single case in the Bible where someone took things into their own hands and it all turned out well.

Yahweh complained about this to Jeremiah.

"My people have committed two sins:

They have forsaken me,  
the spring of living water,  
and have dug their own cisterns,  
broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Not only do we forsake Yahweh, but we try to satisfy our desires our own way and we end up drinking muddy, filthy water, instead of the pure living water that he offers, ... if we will just wait for him to provide it.

Yeshua doesn't say it's wrong to have desires, needs, wants...

But he says that if you have them, if you're tired, weary, needing rest.

Come to him. Let him give you the water you need.

Digging your own well might seem like a bright idea at the time. But a day will come when you will regret it, but will be unable to reverse the damage you have done to yourself, and your descendants.

In Sarah's case, she was messing with much more than an issue of her being able to have a child. God had made a promise to Abraham. And Yeshua was the fulfilment of that promise.

If Sarah had had her way, the lineage would have gone through Ishmael, and Yeshua would never have been born.

We are so self focused, so self obsessed, so stupid, that we just don't know what we're doing, and we bumble on ahead when we should just sit and wait.