

Explore the Bible: February 11

Impatience • Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-6

By Laura Lee Leathers



Leathers

Go
d
ha
d
pr
om
is
ed
Ab
ra
m
th
at
hi
s
de
sc
en
da
nt
s
wo
ul
d
be
nu
me
ro
us

,
li
ke
th
e
du
st
of
th
e
ea
rt
h
an
d
gr
ai
ns
of
sa
nd
on
th
e
se
as
ho
re
.
Bu
t
Go
d
di
d
no
t

te
ll
hi
m
or
Sa
ra
i
wh
en
it
wo
ul
d
ha
pp
en
.
Di
d
th
e
co
up
le
gi
ve
up
ho
pe
?
Di
d
Go
d
ne
ed

th
ei
r
as
si
st
an
ce
to
ma
ke
Hi
s
pr
om
is
e
ha
pp
en
?
Ab
ra
m
an
d
Sa
ra
i
th
ou
gh
t
so
.

Believed (Gen. 15:1-6, CSB) – The chapter opens with the Lord

speaking to Abram in a vision. A vision usually occurs when a person is awake. Throughout the book of Genesis, the Lord frequently spoke through visions to the patriarchs.

The LORD reminds Abram not to be afraid; He is Abram's shield, and his reward will be great. Thinking about that reward, Abram asks, "What can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus" (only time mentioned by name, and might be the servant seeking Isaac a wife in Genesis 24)?

Approximately ten years have passed since God promised Abram he would have a son. There was a custom during this time: if a patriarch did not have a biological son, he could legally adopt a male servant, making him the heir.

Abram tells the Lord God (Adonai Yahweh, translated "Sovereign Lord") that Eliezer would be his heir. In verse three, it seems Abram is blaming God for his lack of a son; perhaps he sees it as divine punishment. Either way, Abram offered a shortcut to God's promise.

The Lord's response was, no, it will not happen your way, just as I promised, the heir will come from your body. Stepping outside the tent, the Lord tells him to look at the stars and count them. Impossible! Once again, the promise is affirmed, "Your offspring will be that numerous."

Notice the phrase "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness" (see Rom. 4:3; Gal 3:6; Jas. 2:23). Believe means to place your confidence, your trust, that what the LORD said, He would do. Here, we see Abram's second act of obedience, the first being his willingness to journey to Canaan.

The rest of chapter fifteen covers the formal ratification of the LORD's covenant with Abram.

Impatient (Gen. 16:1-4) – Sarai also thinks it is her

responsibility to help God fulfill His purpose – another shortcut. In verse one, we meet her Egyptian slave – Hagar. Her name means “stranger,” it is used 12 times in Genesis and two times in Galatians. In Scripture, she is a victim and an antagonist.

Sarai credited God for closing her womb (v. 2), “The Lord has prevented me from bearing children,” but she could not credit Him with the ability to open her womb. Therefore, she convinces Abram to take Hagar, a surrogate mother, as his wife. He did, and she became pregnant.

Was Sarai delighted that her plan worked? No, she despised Hagar. She thought very little of the servant. The contentious relationship and strife would continue for thousands of years.

“Sarai found out the hard way that whatever we acquire outside of God’s will often turns to ashes. Her plan to raise a family through Hagar misfired badly” (The *Charles F. Stanley, Life Principles Bible*).

Impetuous (Gen. 16:5-6) – The maker of plan “B,” Sarai, turns to Abram and states, “You are responsible for my suffering!” The blame game continues, first God, now Abram. Sarai wanted Abram to experience all of what she was experiencing.

“In truth, both Sarai and Abram bore the judgment of God due to their lack of faith. Sarai sought to do God’s will her way. Abraham allowed Sarai to control the situation instead of taking the lead. Both were at fault, and the faith exhibited in Genesis 15:6 appears to be missing in this whole incident” (Lifeway).

The lesson closes with Abram agreeing with Sarai’s wishes the second time. We don’t see him having compassion, defending, or providing for Hagar. Instead, he leaves the situation up to Sarai, who made Hagar’s life miserable through mistreatment. It is so bad Hagar runs away, possibly going back to Egypt.

The rest of the chapter is about Hagar and her encounter with the angel of the Lord. She is encouraged to return to Abram's camp and submit to Sarai's authority. The Lord promises her that her son's descendants will be numerous.

Have you ever said, "How Long, O LORD?" When those days come, read Psalm 13, and remember to fight the urge to create a plan – going ahead of God. Second, trust God's timing and purpose through the waiting (See Psalm 31:24; Isaiah 64:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Leathers is a member of First Church, Lexington. Visit her website: <https://www.lauraleeleathers.com>