

God's Way or Your Way

Friends, in the Bible we have examples of those who took matters into their own hands to work out the Lord's purposes. One well known example is found in Genesis. First, we read in Genesis 15 of the Lord's Covenant with Abram.

Genesis 15:1-5

1 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram.

**I am your shield,
your very great reward."**

2 But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

God's word to Abram was that a son who was of his own flesh and blood would be his heir. Reading further in chapter 16, we see that Sarai, Abram's wife, was getting impatient.

Genesis 16:1-4

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

Home was not a happy place anymore! Hagar despised Sarai, and Sarai mistreated Hagar and Hagar fled from her face. Abram was 86 when Hagar bore him a son whom he named Ishmael. Reading further in Genesis 17, we see that God again appeared to Abram and reaffirmed His covenant with him, changing his name to Abraham, making him a father of many nations and changing Sarai's name to Sarah, for God promised to bless her and make her a mother of many nations. He again promised that Sarah would give him a son. Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed. He said to God, "Will a son be born to a man 100 years old?" "And will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" Then God said "Yes, Sarah shall bear you a son and you shall call his name Isaac." God promised to establish His covenant through Isaac and his descendants. In chapter 21 we read the Lord fulfilled His promise and Sarah bore a son. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. In

chapter 21 we read that some time later, the Lord tested Abraham. He asked him to take his only son he loved, his son Isaac, to Mt. Moriah and sacrifice him as a burnt offering. This time we do not see Abraham questioning God's plans. It says early the next morning, Abraham got up and loaded a donkey and took 2 servants and Isaac for the journey to Moriah. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering they set out on their journey. On the 3rd day they reached the place the Lord told Abraham about. He sent the servants a distance away and took the wood and placed it on Isaac while he carried the knife and fire. Then Isaac asked his father, "Father, the fire and wood are here, but where is the lamb?" Abraham said, "The Lord will provide." He built an altar, laying the wood on it, then took his son, Isaac, and laid him on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Here I am," said Abraham. **12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."**

13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." Genesis 22:12-18

The followers of Jesus today are called children of Abraham. **Galatians 3:29 "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."** God has a people that He has called and preserved, a "peculiar people." He said to the Israelites of old in **Exodus 19:5 "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine."** The promises God gave to ancient Israel belong to His followers today. **Titus 2:14 "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."** No longer doubting, but trusting. No longer disobeying, but obeying. No longer impatient, but patient. No longer laughing, but watching and praying. No longer your way, but God's way. This is what we can learn from the story of Abraham. God is still speaking to us today and He is a promise Keeper.