

# THE WHOLE STORY

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From Genesis to Revelation

## ***Genesis 16***

### ***Introduction:***

Why are we studying Genesis 16? Chapter 15 is the model of faith in the Old Testament (v. 6, “Abram believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”) and God’s covenant to bring about all the promises he made to Abram and his offspring. Remembering chapter 15 will help bring our passage this week into even clearer focus.

Genesis 16 contains an important contrast between man’s proclivity to choose his own, sinful way and God’s steadfastness. To be fair to Abram and Sarai, there have been decades filled with drama between God’s great promise and their present circumstances. They had seen God’s faithfulness and protection, but they had not seen any progress toward realizing God’s specific promise to them. So they take matters into their own hands, which never goes well for them, or us.

### ***This Week’s Main Focus***

***God hears and sees and will fulfill his promise to bless every nation.***

Abram and Sarai try to make God’s promise come on their own by having Abram sleep with someone who was not his wife. The results are predictable; this scenario leads directly to jealousy, anger, marital tension, and relational strife. For those of you wondering if God seemed to condone polygamy because it happened so often a lot of Old Testament stories, you only need to look here to see if the Bible thinks it is a good idea (*it doesn’t*).

This story is one of several ways that Abram and Sarai got nervous and doubted God’s promise. Time after time, God patiently reiterates his promise, and when they show faith, God counts them as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). God shows his faithfulness to his promise in one surprising and amazing way, in chapter 16. God sought after Hagar, comforted her, and promised that her child would become a nation as well! In this story, we see God’s incredible care for the lonely and downtrodden.

Many Middle-Eastern peoples claim Ishmael (Hagar’s son) as their heir. God’s promise to Ishmael’s mother came true! But making him into a nation is not the end of God’s work in their lives. The ultimate promise from Genesis 12:1-3 is that ***all*** nations will be blessed through Abraham’s seed. The New Testament writers declare that Jesus is that seed through whom all nations will be blessed. God’s promise is to extend the same blessings of Christ to every people in the world.

### ***Sermon Response Question:***

1) A few weeks ago we heard Pastor David Platt challenge all of us to give God a blank check with our lives. How have you and your family processed what that does or could mean for you?

***Bible Study Questions:     Read Genesis 16:1-16***

2) Look back at Genesis 16. Who are the main characters in this passage? List out all the actions each one takes and say if it pointed to faith or lack of faith in God.

3) Read Genesis 16:7-16 again. What do you notice about how God intervenes?

4) Why is it important in this passage (and to you personally) that God is a “God of seeing” and one who hears?

5) Thinking about Hagar’s situation in this passage, how does she teach us to interact with injustice in our society?

***Group Application Questions:***

6) Genesis 15:6 says that Abram believed God’s promises and it was credited to him as righteousness. Later, we see Abram and Sarai acting in a way that does not show trust in God’s promises. What are some of God’s promises that you believe yet are not acting on or living in accordance with right now?

7) At some point in our lives, all of us have taken something into our own hands and the consequences were more troublesome than the turmoil of waiting on God. What do you need to trust God with? How can our group help hold you accountable and encourage you in your faith?

***Prayer:***

- Have your group read Psalm 119:25-32.
- There are two main request of God in these verses:
  - Asking God to give strength and understanding from his Word.
  - Celebration of times when he has strengthened us by his Word.
- Have one person ask God to fill everyone in your group with knowledge and understanding of his word.
- Have one person thank God for how he has and is using his word to accomplish his purposes in the world and in our lives.