

# (Genesis) Genesis 16:1-5

by J. Vernon McGee

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*Abraham and Sarah's unbelief leads to the birth of Ishmael, highlighting the importance of trusting in God's plan and the dangers of unbelief.*

**Duration:** 5:59

**Scripture:** Genesis 16:1-15

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on chapter 16 of the Bible, where Abraham and Sarah face a test of faith. Sarah, unable to bear children, suggests that Abraham take her Egyptian maid, Hagar, as a concubine to have a child. The preacher emphasizes that although this was a common practice in that time, it was not approved by God. Abraham agrees to Sarah's suggestion, and Hagar conceives a child, Ishmael. However, the preacher emphasizes that God does not accept this child as part of His plan, as it was a result of Sarah and Abraham's lack of faith.

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## Transcript

Now, we come to chapter 16, and I must confess that you almost wish chapter 16 wasn't in the Bible, that God had left it out. Because after Abraham rose to the heights here, well, you would say, well, believe me, he's certainly trading on high places now. But he's not perfect.

We see the lapse of this man's faith here, relative to Sarah and Hagar, the Egyptian maid. Now, let me read chapter 16, verse 1. Now, Sarah, Abraham's wife, bear him no children. She had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

You see, he got two things down in the land of Egypt that really caused him trouble. Wealth was one thing, and this little Egyptian maid, he got down there. And Sarah said unto Abraham, Behold, now the Lord hath restrained me from bearing.

I pray thee, go in unto my maid. It may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarah.

Now, the thing that this woman has suggested was the common practice of that day. When a wife couldn't bear a child, there was the concubine. And that was common practice of that day.

But don't say God approved this. God did not approve of this at all. This was Sarah's idea.

And frankly, it was not contrary to the custom of the day. And Abraham listened to her. It looks like he's surrendering his position as head of the home here.

And he followed her suggestion. And Sarah, Abraham's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abraham had dwelt 10 years in the land of Canaan and gave her to her husband, Abraham, to be his wife. Now, this little Egyptian maid becomes a concubine.

And this is not according to God's will. God's not going to accept the offspring at all. He didn't.

He wouldn't. Why? Because it was wrong. Don't say God approved this.

All that you can say is that this is in the record because this is a historical fact that took place. Now, we read, he went in unto Hagar. She conceived.

And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. You can see she said, I've mothered a child of Abraham. And Sarah couldn't do it.

She looked down on Sarah, you see. And now notice verse 5. And Sarah said unto Abraham, My wrong is upon me. Now, look, don't go by that.

Don't say that God approved this. He didn't. God says this is wrong.

Now Sarah sees that she's done wrong. My wrong be upon me. She's wrong, my friend.

And I have given my maid into thy bosom. And when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between me and thee.

God doesn't approve of it. God will not accept this. And it's going to be a real heartbreak to old Abraham.

But you see, they're not really trusting God as they should. After all, Abraham at this time is 90 years old. Sarah is 80.

I think they'd come to conclusion that they were not going to have a child. I'm of the opinion that probably Sarah could rationalize and say, well, I think maybe this is the way God wants us to do it. For this is the custom of the day.

And it was the custom of that day. But it's contrary to God's way of doing things. You know, we get the wrong impression if we think just because it's in the Bible, God approves of it.

The only thing that's inspired is that it's an accurate record. But there are many things God does not approve of that are recorded in his word. This happens to be one of them.

But we'll have to wait until next time to pick up our story. Now, as we come back to this 16th chapter, we see here another one of the tests of Abraham in which he failed. You have here the unbelief of both Sarah and Abraham and the birth of Ishmael.

This is certainly a letdown after the wonder of the last chapter. It really is something that is quite disturbing. And will you note now as we come to chapter 16, Sarah suggested to Abram, Hagar the maid, in view of the fact she could not have a child and at least had not had one.

And that, may I say, would be according to the law of that day. The moral implications that you and I read into this are not quite here in the historical record. That does not mean that God does not approve of it because he doesn't.

He'll make that quite evident. But Abraham and Sarah were brought up in Ur of the Chaldees in which this was a common practice. And the moral angle is not the thing that for them was so terrible.

The thing that was terrible, they just didn't believe God. And that is the thing that's the opposite today. The sin that they committed, and it was a sin.

God treated it as by Abram taking Sarah's maid, Hagar. That was a sin. But today we reverse that.

We would say, yes, it's a sin. But the unbelief, we don't pay too much attention to that. And yet that was the real sin here.

That is, lots blacker than the other. Now, when this boy Ishmael was born, this maid looked down on Sarah. Sarah realized she had done wrong.

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