

(Life of Abram) Token of God's Promise – Part 8



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Genesis 17:1-22

As we journey into Genesis chapter 17, we now read Abram is 99 years old. Thirteen years have passed since the birth of Ishmael the child of the flesh influenced by Sarai's plan to help God. As we learned, the works of the flesh profited nothing in Abram and Sarai's lives. But, God didn't forget them! In chapter 17 we will experience God's great mercy and His plan for reconciling man back to Him by establishing "a family/nation."

The Presence of God (vs 1-2)

God appears to Abram for the 5th time with three actions taking place:

God announces Himself as "*I Am the Almighty God,*" which means El Shaddai.

He gives Abram instructions of a godly character: "walk before me and be perfect," which is a walk of faith.

God Reminds Abram of The Covenant (vs. 3-4)

Three wonder things happened in these verses: 1) Abram falls on his face! Being in the present of Almighty God puts one in a prostrate position. The Bible says that every knee will bow before Almighty God either out of respect and love or out of sinful fear. In Abram's case he fell before the Lord out of love and respect. 2) God talks audibly with Abram. The Bible says Abram was His friend; and 3) God reminds Abram of His Covenant to make him a "father of many nations." Abram may have become discouraged after 13 years of waiting for the promised heir, so God reminds Abram that He never forgets His promises. *What God promises, He will bring about in His timing, not man's!*

Abram's Name Change (vs. 5-6)

God now informs Abram his name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham to represent his new position. Abram will now be called Abraham "*father of many nations!*" God continues by telling Abraham 1) it is He (God) who has the power to make him (Abraham) a father of many nations; and 2) it is God who will make Abraham so fruitful that kings will come from him. Now, if you were 99 years old and given a promise like this, what would your thoughts be! So imagine the

thoughts going through Abrahams mind! Abraham may or may not have realized it, but God was about to do something great through his seed – to begin the process of redemption and reconciliation for mankind.

Terms of the Covenant (vs. 7-8)

We now read God outlining to Abraham the terms or statutes of the Covenant by saying *“I will not only make my Covenant with you, but also with your seed (Israel) after you (every generation) for an “everlasting covenant.”* God is so good, He not only promises Abraham to be a “father of many nations,” He also gives Abraham the land in which he was a stranger as an “everlasting possession.” The land God gave to Abraham and his seed for every generation to come is the “land of Canaan.” Friends, this land as of today, still belongs to the children of Israel. Did you also notice that God says *“I will establish!”* It is God’s power not Abraham’s power to fulfill the terms of the Covenant. This Covenant was established by God for Abraham and his seed, and fulfilled as stated. As part of the Covenant, Israel at one time was the greatest nations on earth, and one day will once again be the greatest nation on earth. When God blesses His children, it is always more than we can possibly imagine, and He never voids what He gives us!

Token (Seal) of the Covenant (vs. 9-14)

Circumcision was an outward token of God’s “everlasting covenant” with Abraham and his seed for every generation. This token was done in the flesh and served as a type of the Cross until the “New Covenant” was bought by Jesus Christ by the shedding of His blood on the Cross. Anyone not circumcised was cut off from his people for refusing the Covenant. Please note, this was an outward ordinance by Abraham and his seed but they still had to walk by “faith.” Faith is always the key for a victorious walk, and faith is only what God accepts.

Changing of Sarai’s Name (vs. 15-16)

What I love about vs. 15-16 is that God’s love and mercy is demonstrated here. Although Sarai influenced Abram to resort to the flesh in bringing about God’s Covenant Promise, God didn’t cast her aside. No! He remembers her and firmly affirms Abraham the following three-fold statement: *“I will bless her with a son, she will be a mother of many nations and kings will come from her.”* When God says His mercies are new each morning, this is a great example of His “new mercies!” He remembered Sarai and changed her name to Sarah which means “princess” and blessed her by giving her the son she so desired and much more!

Abraham Laughs & Ishmael’s Inheritance (vs. 17-22)

Once again we read God’s mercy demonstrate here with Ishmael. We serve such a loving God! Abraham after hearing God’s instructions asked about Ishmael. God firmly tells Abraham Ishmael is not the promised son. Sarah will definitely give birth to the “promised son” and you are to name him Isaac. As for Ishmael God replied “I have heard you.” I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and I will multiply him greatly with 12 princes and I will make him a great

nation.” Notice God says “I have” and “I will” letting the reader know it is Almighty God who has the power to bless and not man!

Principles to be learned from this chapter:

- God never forgets His promises.
- It is God that gives men the power to prosper in every area.
- The flesh is never rewarded.
- When God gives us a possession, He does not take it back.
- God’s timing is different than man’s timing.
- God uses earthly means and methods to convey a heavenly message; i.e., circumcision is a type of the Cross.
- Isaac is a type of Christ. Isaac is the promised son. Jesus is the Promised Son; both born in God’s fullness of time.
- With the Covenant Promise men had to still walk by faith.

Scriptures:

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. ²And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.”

³And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, ⁴As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.”

⁵Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. ⁶And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.”

⁷And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. “

⁸And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

⁹And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. ¹⁰This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you ¹²And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. ¹³He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.”

¹⁵And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. ¹⁶And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

¹⁷Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? ¹⁸And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! ¹⁹And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. ²⁰And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. ²²And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

