

GENESIS 17:1-14

LESSON: CIRCUMCISION — September 10, 2017

SYNOPSIS:

Chapter 16:1-16 ¹In this passage, we find a couple who refuses to take God at His word and so decide they need to help Him out. The conduct of Abram and Sarai was forbidden; but according to the legal custom of the day, a barren woman could give her maid to her husband as a wife. And Sarai allowed Hagar, an Egyptian to sleep with her husband, Abram to conceive a child God had promised to them, and Abram agreed. The bottom line is that this solution to their barrenness was an effort of the flesh, and not of God. Hagar conceived and when Sarai saw that she had conceived Hagar looked with contempt toward her (**16:1-4**).

At that point Sarai knew she had done wrong and said, *"May the LORD judge between you and me!"* but Abram told Sarai that Hagar was in her power, so do to her what she pleased. So, Sarai did harshly, and Hagar fled into the wilderness where the angel of the Lord found her by the fountain along the road to Shur. The angel called her by name, asking her questions, then telling her to return to her mistress Sarai and submit herself under her hands (**16:5-9**).

The angel added that He would increase her seed exceedingly that would be too numerous to count. He told her that she was pregnant with child and will bear a son and call his name Ishmael (meaning God hears) because the Lord had heard her affliction. The angel described Ishmael to be a wild man; his hand will be against every man and every man against him, and he will dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Today, the Arabs control the oil reserves of the world and threaten global peace. Their hostility toward Israel keeps the world in turmoil, even on the brink of another world war. Hagar then called the name of the Lord who spoke to her—Jehovah, for it was He who appeared to her. She recognized that the angel was the Lord, the God of Abraham; the God who looked upon her. And she thought I saw God and lived to tell it. The well she was by was later named *"The Well of the Living One Who Sees Me"* between Kadesh and Bered. And Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore him a son named Ishmael (**16:10-16**).

LESSON: I. COVENANTAL DECLARATION Genesis 17:1-6

17:1 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. God appears several times to Abram, and now again at the age of 99yrs old, God tells Abram that He's the Almighty God—the God who can do the impossible; the God who has all might and power. God is stirring up his faith. When our faith is stirred, there is something we have to do. We, just as Abram is expected to act; to put the new knowledge to use, and to grow thereby. God wants him to look beyond the present; look beyond the physical, look beyond the possible as far as Ishmael is concerned. God gave Abram a new revelation of Himself as the Almighty God, but God tells Abram to do something: walk before Him and be perfect and blameless.

1. To walk before God means that we live before Him in a spirit of devotion, worship, fellowship, and service;

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/hagar-and-ishmael/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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not being in front of Him. But, we are aware of His power; see and know Him, and that He is judge in our walk.

2. **To be perfect** means without blemish; to be sound; complete, to live holy lives before God; to develop a heart that is single-mindedly set upon God first; to be conformed to the image of Christ, and to please God with all our hearts.

If Abram would do this... then God would do this... The next verse says *"And I will..."* We who are in Christ strive to be perfect, but our perfection is in Christ. We do this because of the Father's love for us; the Son's acceptance to go to the cross for us, and the Spirit's leading and guidance within us. Jesus told His disciples: *"Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"* Matthew 5:48. This is messaged throughout the Bible. And even at the age of 99yrs, this is what God wants from Abram!

17:2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. God already knows about Ishmael who is now 13 years old. However, time had passed, and now Abram at 99yrs old God is again declaring His same covenant He had proposed before between He and Abram: He will multiply him exceedingly. God made the promise and He will fulfill His promises to Abram with the promised son which is not Ishmael. He's not going back on it! God will send His Promised Seed through Abram's descendants. God's promise is for anyone who walks before Him in a spirit of devotion, worship, fellowship, and service, and also to diligently seek to be perfect and blameless in our hearts.

17:3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,— Abram couldn't do anything but fall on his face as God talked with him.

17:4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. God lets Abram know that His covenant is with him. He will make him the **1)** father of many nations. The promise points far beyond those who were to be his physical descendant and looks forward to the families of the earth that were to be spiritually blessed in him.

17:5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. Now, it is determined by God that **2)** Abram's name is changed to Abraham— for that's what his name will mean— *"father of many nations!"* His new name will remind him of this experience with God—God's great call and His covenant of great assurance to fulfill His promise.

17:6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. With this change Abram had to hear and believe that God would make him **3)** exceedingly fruitful. Many descendants will **4)** become nations from Abraham **5)** and kings shall be formed out of him.

II. COVENANTAL DURATION Genesis 17:7-8

17:7 And 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. This covenant would extend to all of Abraham's seed, **6)** from generation to generation. His covenant's duration is that He will be a God unto Abraham and his seed forever, having a relationship and fellowship with the One True God.

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17:8 And 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. Even the land they are a stranger in; the entire land of Canaan will be given to Abraham and his seed after him. Just as they received an everlasting covenant (v.7), the land is an everlasting possession; ongoing and forever and extending from one generation to the next generation. Also, God will be their God forever, the only True God they need.

III. COVENANTAL DEMANDS Genesis 17:9-14

17:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. God tells Abraham in order to keep His part of the covenant that he and his offspring after him throughout their generations must obey and honor its terms.

17:10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. God gave Abraham the sign or ritual of the covenant - it was circumcision. Circumcision was not a Hebrew invention. It was used in Egypt from very early periods as an act of ritual purity (apparently a requirement for men who would work in an Egyptian Temple). In obedience, God's covenant commanded every man child to be circumcised. The covenant people must bear the mark of the covenant. Unfortunately, the Jewish people eventually made this ritual a means of salvation. "*Circumcision*" was a guarantee that you were accepted by God. Today, the ritual of circumcision for the believer refers to a spiritual circumcision, for God wants us to circumcise our hearts and be totally devoted to Him in love and obedience.

17:11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. God had made a token' a sign, or proof of the covenant between He and Abraham and his seed after him. Every male had to have the excess skin around the tip or foreskin of the penis cut off.

17:12 And 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. Circumcision was performed at a set time. And this would occur at the age of eight days old for every man child in his generation born in the house or brought with money of any stranger which was not their seed.

17:13 He 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. This would also include men, because if they were bought with money or stranger which was not their seed, they had to be circumcised. This was a token and a sign of God's covenant.

17:14 And 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. And any man child that is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people because he had broken the covenant

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SUMMARY:

17:1-6 Abram was 99 years old when the Lord appeared before him saying, He is the Almighty God and to walk before Him and be perfect **17:1**. He would make His covenant between Himself and Abram, multiplying them exceedingly **17:2**. Abram then fell on his face as God talked with him proclaiming His covenant with him and declaring he will be the father of many nations **17:3-4**. Abram's name will be changed to Abraham because God has made him the father of many nations **17:5**. He will be exceedingly fruitful making nations and kings from him **17:6**.

17:7-8 God confirms again that His covenant is established between Himself and Abraham and Abraham's seed after him and their generations for an everlasting covenant. And God shall be his God and God of his descendants **17:7**, even the land they are a stranger in; the entire land of Canaan will be given to Abraham and his seed after him for an everlasting possession. And He will be their God **17:8**

17:9-14 Then God said this to Abraham and his seed after him in their generations, that he must obey His covenant **17:9**. This is God's covenant which they must obey which is between He and Abraham and it's also between Abraham and his descendants, to be circumcised (men) **17:10**. The flesh shall be circumcised. The foreskin must be cut off and it will be evidence that there is a covenant between God and Abraham **17:11**. All males must be circumcised when they are 8 days old, rather those born in their household or those that were bought with money from foreigners **17:12**. So again, those in the house and those bought with money are to be circumcised. In that way, God's covenant will be in their flesh (body) lasting for always **17:13**. The male child that had not received circumcision of his foreskin that soul is considered cut off from his people and had broken God's covenant **17:14**.