

# GENESIS 17:1-8, 15-21

## LESSON: AN EVERLASTING COVENANT — July 7, 2019

### INTRODUCTION:

**16:11-16** The angel of the Lord lets Hagar know that she was pregnant with child and will bear a son and to call his name Ishmael (meaning God hears) because the Lord had heard her affliction. He will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him. He will dwell in the presence of all his brethren, (Israel), but will never subdue Israel. She called on the name of the Lord who spoke to her—He looked after her and saw her. The well she had stopped at was later named "The Well of the Living One Who Sees Me" between Kadesh and Bered. Hagar has placed herself under the authority of Sarai and Abram's son is born, calling him Ishmael.

### LESSON: I. GOD'S APPEARANCE GENESIS 17:1-8

**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 are expected to act; to put this new knowledge to use, and to grow. 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; not being in front of Him, but have a position of humbleness; be aware of His power and have a respectful behavior.
2. To be perfect means without blemish; to be sound; complete, to live holy lives before God; to develop a heart that is single-minded, set upon God first; to be conformed to the image of Christ, and to please God with all our heart.

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 only 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: In Matthew 5:48 "*Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*" This is messaged throughout the Bible. Even at the age of 99yrs, God wants this 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, and He still wants to make a covenant with Abram. Time had passed, and now Abram at 99yrs old, God is again declaring His same promises 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 His Word! 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,**— Upon hearing of the covenant that God Himself will make between He and Abram, Abram couldn't do anything but fall upon his face as God talked with him. He knew at that point that God would multiply him exceedingly, so Abram showed reverence to God and listened and received the message of God.

## COVENANT—MADE ABRAM TO BE

**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 **GOD'S COVENANT IS WITH ABRAM**. He will make him **1) a father of many nations**. The promise points far beyond those who were to be his physical descendants and looks forward to the families of the earth that were to be spiritually blessed in him.

## NAME CHANGE OF ABRAM

**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!"* This is who God had made him to be. His new name will remind him of this experience with God—God's great call and His covenant of great assurance will fulfill His promise. This very declaration shows that God is a covenant keeping God who fulfills His promises.

**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**.

**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 Living God.

**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), **7) the land is an everlasting possession**; ongoing and forever and extending from one generation to the next generation. Also, **8) God will be their God forever**, the only True Living God they need.

## NOT APART OF THE LESSON 17:9-14

**17:9-14** God told Abraham to keep His covenant from generation to generations 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; **9) every man child to be circumcised** **17:10**. The flesh shall be circumcised, that is, the foreskin must be cut off, and **this will be evidence that there is a covenant between God and Abraham** **17:11**. At 8 days old, all males must be circumcised, whether born in their household or bought with money from foreigners **17:12**. So again, those in the house and 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**.

## II. GOD'S ELABORATION GENESIS 17:15-21

**17:15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.** Just as Abraham's name was changed, **1)** his wife Sarai's name is changed to Sarah. "Sarai" meant *"my princess"*, and "Sarah" means *"princess."* Now, when Abraham calls his wife's name, he is really saying "princess." A name change in Scripture reflects a change in destiny. <sup>1</sup>God really did not regard Hagar as Abraham's wife. The wife that God recognized was Sarah. God's promises would come through her.

**17:16 And 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.** God explains to Abraham that Sarah will no longer be barren. God Almighty will overcome Sarah's barrenness and bless them with a son. God pronounces a double blessing upon her! **2)** A son will come from her and **3)** she will be the mother of nations; **4)** and many kings will come from her. The blessings coming through Sarah will bless Abraham with the promised son.

**17:17 Then 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?**— This was really funny to Abraham at his age, for Abraham who was now 100yrs old and Sarah was 90yrs old to hear such a thing now— that God would bless Sarah and give her a son, and she shall be a mother of nations. He fell on his face and laughed. He began to say within his heart shall a child be born unto them at this age? It was so funny that it turned into rejoicing and joy to hear such good news.

**17:18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!**— In that moment Abraham thinks of his only son Ishmael, the only son he had ever known and grown to love. Now, his relationship with Ishmael was about to change and Abraham cries out for God to bless Ishmael; that Ishmael might live in God's presence.

**17:19 And 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.** God revealed that she will indeed be the one who will bare Abraham a son, calling his name Isaac. And God will be the One who will establish His covenant with Abraham; an everlasting covenant with his seed after him.

**17:20 And 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.** Ishmael is not put on his back-burner. God heard Abraham, and God will also bless Ishmael. He will make Ishmael fruitful; will multiply him exceedingly, and Ishmael will beget (shall become father) of 12 princes (leaders; rulers) and God will make him a great nation.

**17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.** God's covenant of the promise seed will be established through Isaac, not Ishmael. The time-line was set—next year for Sarah to bear her son.

## SUMMARY:

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 him exceedingly **17:2**. Abram 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 is now changed to Abraham because God has made him the father of many nations **17:5**. And he will be exceedingly fruitful making nations and kings from him **17:6**. 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 the 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**. (**17:1-8**)

God now changes Abraham's wife's name from Sarai, *"my princess"* to Sarah, *"princess."* God further tells Abraham that He will bless Sarah. She will be the mother of nations and kings of peoples will come from her, and Abraham will receive a son by her. This was such good news that Abraham fell to the ground and laughed to himself thinking of his age (100) and Sarah's age (90) wondering shall a child be born unto them at this age? God will bless Sarah and give her a son, making her mother of nations. In that moment Abraham thinks of his only son Ishmael, and Abraham cries out for God to bless Ishmael; that Ishmael might live in God's presence. God revealed that she will indeed be the one who will bare Abraham a son calling his name Isaac. God will establish an everlasting covenant with Abraham; and with his seed after him. God will make Ishmael fruitful; will multiply him exceedingly, and Ishmael will become father of 12 princes (leaders; rulers) and God will make him a great nation. But God's covenant of the promise seed is established through Isaac, not Ishmael. The time-line was set—next year for Sarah to bear Abraham a son (**17:15-21**).