

God's Covenant and His Greatness

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 17 & 18

In Genesis 17 and 18, God makes certain covenants to Abram and his offspring. Here are the blessings that He promised:

1. I will multiply you exceedingly (Genesis 17:2)

Jeremiah 29:11 says, ***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*** We are sometimes guilty of letting our circumstances—whether it be our past issues or present situations—affect our attitude. However, we must remember that God has a plan for us, and His plans for our lives are for our benefit.

2. Father of a multitude of nations (Genesis 17:4)

Usually, blessings are handed down from the firstborn to the younger siblings. We remember that at this point, Abram had fathered a son, Ishmael, with his maidservant, Hagar. However, God made this covenant—for Abram to become a father of a multitude of nations—to the son that he will have with his wife, Sarai. Abram pleaded on behalf of his firstborn, but God asserted that while He would also bless Ishmael, this particular promise wasn't meant for him.

3. I will change you (Genesis 17:5-6, 15-16)

Abram—which means “exalted father”—became Abraham, a name that translates to “father of many, multitudes of nations.” Meanwhile, Sarai, which means “princess,” became Sarah, a name that means “My princess” and “mother of nations.” There is a certain weight attached to names, so it is significant that God decides to change the names of the two.

4. Everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:7)

God's promise to Abraham—that He would be God to him and his offspring—was an everlasting covenant. This means that the agreement can never be broken.

In Genesis 17, Abraham points out a few “problems” with the covenant:

1. Age

At the point of the establishment of this covenant, Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah was 89. The promise of bearing a child at such an old age doesn't seem possible if we look at it from human understanding. However, we know that nothing is impossible with God.

2. Timeline

After the birth of Ishmael, Abraham and Sarah had to wait about 13 to 14 years before this covenant was given. There is value in waiting. Isaiah 40:31 says, ***“Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired; they will walk and not become weary.”*** We are given the chance to be recipients of God's promises, but we have to learn to wait on the Lord.

3. Hagar & Ishmael - man's own decision to meddle in God's authority; resulted in conflict

Even after God promised Abraham and Sarah that they would bear children, the two were unable to wait in the beginning and ended up meddling in God's plans through Hagar and Ishmael. Because of this, we are

experiencing conflict in the Middle East.

The fulfillment of the covenant:

1. God is great (Genesis 17:1)

The point of God’s covenant with Abraham is its fulfillment. There are no problems with this on God’s end, because He is Almighty. There’s a saying that goes, “Promises are made to be broken,” but this is not the case with God. We can be assured that God always keeps His promises.

2. Our responsibility as laid out by God (Genesis 17:1)

Micah 6:8 says, **He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?** God tells Abraham in Genesis 17:1 to walk before Him and be blameless, and this trickles down to us. To walk blameless before God is to abide in Him (John 15:5).

3. God is greater than our weaknesses (Genesis 18:11-12)

One of Abraham and Sarah’s weaknesses was their old age. Our weaknesses are what prevents us from growing and blossoming and causes us to sin. When we sin, we cannot ask God to bless our mess; instead, we should ask God to have His way with it. God says in Jeremiah 32:27, **Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?** God has one more move; wait for Him to make it. He has one more word; wait for Him to say it.

APPLICATION:

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage’s lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

God is El Shaddai. What does this mean to you?

	<p>Personal: Make a list of the of 10 things that God wants to show you that He is greater than. .. (God is greater than my illness, God is greater than my financial problems, etc) What are the things/ beliefs that are hindering us from completely trusting in God’s promises for us?</p>
	<p>Family: Think of a specific experience in your life that you and your wife experienced God move in your life the same way Abraham and Sarah did. Discuss the events that led to it and what the experience taught you about God. How can we as a family encourage each other and support each other as we learn about God’s faithfulness? The best proof of God’s faithfulness is Jesus Christ – how are we living our lives as the recipients of God’s faithfulness and Jesus Christ’s sacrifice?</p>
	<p>Discipleship: How are we discipling our family? Do I as a husband disciple my wife? Do we as parents disciple our children? When was the last time I was at an accountability session with my disciple?</p>
	<p>Church/ Ministry: What are we actively and intentionally doing in fulfillment of Matthew 28:18-20.</p>

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.