

Genesis

Chapter 17:1-8

✠ **Gen 17:1-8** ¹ *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. ² "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." ³ Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: ⁴ "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ⁵ "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. ⁸ "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."*

Last week saw that Abram was 86, here it is 13 years later when God speaks to Abram. When God first spoke to Abram he was 75, and when Abram and Sarai first started to try to help out God, Abram was around 85. So if you think about it, there was a 24 year span of time from when God first spoke to Abram until this point in his life.

24 years ago, where were you? I was 16 years old and thought I was 24. I knew every thing there is to know (or at least that's how all teenagers think), my life was a mess hanging out at bars and night clubs, and within a year I would quit High School and live with my sister, then get married a year later. (Note: this was originally written 19 years ago) But I knew everything, or so I thought. Little did I know that, 3 years later I would hear God's Son, Jesus calling to me, offering me forgiveness for the way I had been living. And God did this in a way I never thought He would. He used my dad.

You see I learned all about living the life I had been from my dad who was an alcoholic but turned his life over to the Lord. I watched my dad and saw the change in him. Going from bars every night, to church. Going from morning to night drinking alcohol, to going from morning to evening drinking from the word of God.

Where were you 24 years ago? What if God had told you that today you would be where you are today? You would probably had said that God was crazy, but now you find out that you were the one who was crazy for rejecting Him all those years.

But God called Abram 24 years before this time letting him know that He would bless all nations through him. As a 16-year-old I knew about God and tried to work out my salvation my own way. Reading His word once or twice a year, starting in Genesis and ending in Genesis, not getting very far.

My intentions may have been good, and in my heart I desired to know God, but satan would take that away and offer the things of this world, and as a teenager I believed that was where I could find happiness. But all I had was emptiness. Just as Abram probably had, now the husband of two wives and a child which wasn't the promise of God. But God knew when to intervene in the whole situation. It's like God waits till the last minute to do things, or when we don't expect Him to.

But in reality it's us that hold back God's blessing in our life. We get so puffed up that we think we did it. So God has to wait until we will acknowledge Him as doing the work and not ourselves.

✠ **Gen 17:1 (NLT)** *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; serve me faithfully and live a blameless life."*

Or "*be thou perfect*" as, it says in the KJV.

So was Abram a perfect man?

✠ **Romans 4:13 & 22(NLT)** ¹³ *It is clear, then, that God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was not based on obedience to God's law, but on the new relationship with God that comes by faith.*
²² *And because of Abraham's faith, God declared him to be righteous.*

Abram was not perfect; it was his faith in God, not his actions that made him blameless before God. Abram knew that without God he was nothing, especially if your 99 and you think you can't have children on your own.

Also notice it says Abram had a NEW relationship with God. Serving God faithfully. How do you do that? I think in this situation and all situations Proverbs tells us how.

✠ **Prov 27:18** *Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit; So he who waits on his master will be honored.*

He who waits on His master will be honored. That is what Abram did, he was waiting on his Master, God. "*But he took Hagar as a wife to have children.*" you may be thinking. Yes he did, but it wasn't his idea, even if he did listen to his wife. I don't believe that Abram thought this was how God was going to fulfill His promise to him. I say this because of what Romans says about this situation.

✠ **Romans 4:1-3 (NLT)**¹ *Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What were his experiences concerning this question of being saved by faith? ² Was it because of his good deeds that God accepted him? If so, he would have had something to boast about. But from God's point of view Abraham had no basis at all for pride. ³ For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, so God declared him to be righteous."*

Abram had nothing to boast about, especially when he listened to his wife. But still Abram believed God and that was his righteousness.

Also Abram messed up by having Hagar as his wife and I think Abram knew it, so 13 years later when God came to him again, he was like a child caught with his hand in the cookie jar. He was found guilty.

But did you notice that even though Abram was guilty of not being obedient to God, God never said, “You messed up big time Abram.” No, God had made a promise to Abram despite his sinning. God has also made a promise to us as believers, that if we believe in His Son Jesus we shall be saved.

† **Romans 10:13** *For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

It doesn't say that, “this is only good until you blow it again.” We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but through His Son, Jesus Christ we will all be saved. Just by calling on His name and believing. And when you blow it and fall into sin, confess your sins and you shall be saved.

† **1 John 1:9-10** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

It's hard to admit you are a sinner, but we all are. And as the scripture says, if you say you don't sin, then you're calling God a liar. But confession of your sins is only part of the salvation, because anyone can say that they are a sinner. You must believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead, and confess Him as Lord not just to Him, but to others also.

† **Romans 10:9** *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

And if you refuse to do it now, you will eventually do it. I prefer to do it now, but even in heaven before my savior, I will bow my knee to Him because He is Lord of lords and King of kings!

† **Philippians 2:10-11** *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

✎ **3** *Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:*

Abram acknowledged who God was and fell on his face. When was the last time you fell on your face before God and acknowledged Him for who He is?

✠ **4 As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.**

Once again God is reminding Abram that His covenant is with him and no other. Also at this point God changes Abram's name to Abraham. Why?

Abram = High father or exalted father.

Abraham = "father of a multitude" or "chief of multitude"

Abram was not a king. He was a father who was looked up to, not only by his own family, but by others also. When we have been reading about Abram, we saw he was rescuing his nephew Lot, and was looked up to in Egypt (before he got caught in a lie). It seemed everywhere he went people knew he was not just an ordinary man, but a man of God. And now God was proclaiming Abram, as not only a father but changed his name to Abraham showing God's promise of a father of many nations.

✠ **6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.**

God says that He will make Abraham exceedingly fruitful. When we see the word fruitful we immediately think of worldly possessions, but that is not what God is talking about here. In the NLT it reads:

✠ **Gen 17:6 (NLT) I will give you millions of descendants who will represent many nations. Kings will be among them!**

God also says that Kings will come from you Abram. This is a prophecy from God since there were no kings over Israel until King Saul.

† **1 Sam 8:4-7 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.**

God was to be King over Israel forever, but the people wanted something they could see and talk to and have talk back to them.

Don't you feel like that sometimes? We think, "I wish God would just talk to me." Well first off, if He did, you would die. Second He does talk to you, the question is, are you listening?

“How does God talk to me, I can’t hear Him?” You may be thinking.

God speaks through His word and through other believers to you. He can speak to you in church, or in this bible study. Once again, are you listening to God?

7 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. 8 "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

God made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. And What was that covenant? We see it in the book of Psalms:

† Psalms 105:8-11 (NLT) 8 He always stands by his covenant-- the commitment he made to a thousand generations. 9 This is the covenant he made with Abraham and the oath he swore to Isaac. 10 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to the people of Israel as a never-ending treaty: 11 "I will give you the land of Canaan as your special possession."

But there is a new covenant that God has made with His people:

† Jer 31:31-34 (NLT) 31 "The day will come," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 32 This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the LORD. 33 "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day," says the LORD. "I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, 'You should know the LORD.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness and will never again remember their sins."

† Heb 12:24 (NLT) You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which graciously forgives instead of crying out for vengeance as the blood of Abel did.

† Heb 13:20-21 (NLT) And now, may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, all that is pleasing to him. Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep by an everlasting covenant, signed with his blood. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.