

## Sovereignty and Responsibility 2015-12-13

### Gen 17:1-5, 9-10, 15-21

**23 years after** covenant **promises** Abram is **content** w/Ishmael, his 13 yr. legitimate son/heir, as the **son of promise**.

- We **often settle** for **lesser** things that our **flesh produces**.
  - But **El Shaddai** [God Almighty] had **plan** for Abram & us that's **grandier** than could be **imagined**. Gen 17:1-5 & 18, Eph 1:11

**Sovereign** God, not man, **determines** course of **history** in **His time/way**, not ours.

- **Not** much human **free will** or **debate** in **this chapter!**
  - **Changes** A&S's names, states **Sarai** have **promised son** named **Isaac**, **denies** Abram's **request**, establishes **covenant w/Isaac**.
- **Non-sovereign** God **isn't God** at all, **no guarantee** could **fulfill** single **promise**.  
**Unilateral** covenant **not mean** living within covenant **required nothing** of **Abram**.

- **Responsible** to **walk** before their promise-making God **blamelessly**.
  - **not "perfection"** but **expression** of **faithful obedience** to Him.
    - Father **knew** we **couldn't do** but a **descendant** of Abraham **WOULD** walk before Him **blamelessly for us....JC**. 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Jn 3:5, 1 Pet 2:22,
- God's **choosing** & setting apart had **real-life** moral & ethical **implications**.
  - **Not only** share family **name**, but bear family **resemblance** in **life, character, speech, thoughts, actions....holiness/Christlikeness**.
    - **Live faithful, obedient** life **fitting** for those who **belong** to God **not** earn right **standing/His love** but **act of devotion, gratitude** & love.
      - **knowing** when **fall short** have **covering** in **JC**.
- **Shy** away **telling obligations**: accused of **works salvation** or **legalism**.
  - **JC/Paul/John** challenged people's **faith** & their **practice**. 1 Jn 3:7-10, Tit 2:11-12, Phil 2:12-13, Jn 8:10-11

Cxn **position** before God **not result** of **obedience** but **proven** by it.

- That's why **following general call** to **obedience**, God **commanded** a very **specific** demonstration of **obedience**. Gen 17:9-10, Col 2:11-12
  - **His people** were to **stand out** distinctively among all people by **way lived** & by **commonplace sign** they were to bear. **Circumcision**
    - Later **replaced** by in NT by **non-gender** specific sign: **baptism**.
- **Not sure why** this **particular** cultural **symbol**. Why **not tattoo?**
  - tied to **descendants** & **promised seed**; fleshly, **sinful**, nature from birth must be **cut off**; **connection w/circumcision** of **flesh/heart** (Deut. 30:6, Mt. 22:37); **importance** of sexual **purity in obedience**.
- **More important** than **speculations** of **why** circumcision chosen is **what** this sign **pointed TO**: El Shaddai's **covenant faithfulness**.
  - I've **not forgotten** for **13 years**. **Believe promises I made** to you Abram.

**El Shaddai** has **not forgotten you** either. Eph 3:16-20, C.S. Lewis mud pie quote

- **Don't settle** for **lesser** Ishmael things your **flesh can produce** but **trust & hope** in **Almighty**, sovereign God to **do impossible** in your **marriage**, children, **future**, habitual sin, etc. Leland Wong letterhead: Josh 10:13, 2 Kings 6:6, Ps 48:14

### **Genesis 17:1-5, 9-10, 15-21**

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 4 "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

**9-10** And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.

**15-21** And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." 17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" 19 God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. 21 But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."