Genesis 16-17

Review

- Overcoming doubt and fear – Abram still had no kids and no land…
- The Lord gave him the simple answer – look up!
- God promised Abram a son – and Abram BELIEVED – God counted for RIGHTEOUSNESS!
- God made a covenant with Abram for the Land – from the Nile river to the Euphrates!

Walk blameless…

- **1st – A bad idea…vs. 1-3** (4 points)
  - 1st – It is hard to WAIT…
    - 10 years had passed since the Lord had called Abram out of his country...
    - 10 years since He had PROMISED to give Abram children – more than the stars…
    - And still God had not fulfilled His PROMISE!
    - **James 1:4** – "Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete…"
    - God has given us the promise that He will make us PERFECT and COMPLETE…
    - The challenge is we want to be perfected instantly – we miss the PATIENCE part!
    - We FORGET God has promised to perfect us - by His grace in His time!
    - **II Peter 3:8-9** – "You must not forget [because we always do], dear friends, that a day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day…"
    - Following Jesus means being PATIENT – willing to wait on the Lord for His timing!
    - **Psalm 27:14** – "Wait patiently for the LORD… Yes, wait patiently for the LORD."
  - 2nd – Sarai had a maidservant named Hagar (*flight*) … vs. 1
    - This was the same servant that they got while in Egypt – **Genesis 12:10-20**
      - There had been a famine in the land (*no food*) so Abram went to Egypt (*the world*) …
      - There he lied about Sarai (*his sister)* and she was taken into the house of Pharaoh…
      - Because of Sarai the Pharaoh blessed Abram with servants – including Hagar…
      - Abraham had trusted in the WORLD during a hard time - the famine...
      - Now Sarai went back again to someone from the world – Hagar – for help getting a son!
    - The example of Abram – was passed onto his wife…
      - **I Corinthians 11:3** – "I want you to understand that… the head of a wife is her husband…"
      - Husbands we need to be careful about the example we give to our wives / families…
      - We are the spiritual leaders of our homes – we set the precedent for them to follow…
      - If we are TRUST in the WORLD to give us solutions – THEY will also put their faith there…
      - If we are putting our TRUST in the LORD – then our wives / children will also!
  - 3rd - Sarai believed she would NEVER have a child… vs. 2
    - See now Lord has restrained (*perfect*) me from bearing…
      - Sarai knew the Lord had promised to give them children – **Genesis 12:2 / 13:16 / 15:5**
      - Note Sarai in essence blames the Lord for not having children – HE restrained her!
      - When things do not go the way we want - there is a temptation to blame God…
      - It is your fault God - why did YOU let things go wrong...
      - Yet often we are actually suffering from our own poor decisions - sinful choices...
      - Or we just might not understand HIS plan – and get impatient waiting!
    - Perhaps God just needed a little help…

- Harar could have children for Sarai to call her own!
- This may seem an odd – even immoral – idea…
- The New Testament makes it very clear we can only have ONE spouse – **I Corinthians 7:2**
- But having multiple wives was a common practice at that point in history…
- We saw it first with Lamech – **Genesis 4:23** / see will it again with Esau – **Genesis 28:9**
- And if a woman was barren – she could give her servant to her husband…
- We will see the same practice with the Leah and Rachel – **Genesis 30:3 / 30:9**
- The children of the servant would then be raised as her own!
- The plan sounded good – but it did not depend on the Lord!

o 4th - Sarai gave Hagar to be a second wife of Abram… vs. 3
- He took Hagar as his wife – in an effort to fulfill the promise of God!
  - **Galatians 4:22-23** – "The Scriptures say that Abraham had two sons, one from his slave-wife and one from his freeborn wife. The son of the slave-wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise. But the son of the freeborn wife was born as God's own fulfillment of his promise."
  - God made a promise to Abram – and HE was going to keep it…
  - But because Abram had tried to help God - he created a work of the flesh!
  - **Hebrews 12:28** – "Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably…"
  - It is impossible to please God – server the Lord – in our own strength!
  - The problem of trusting in ourselves – is we end up creating Ishmaels...
  - Rather than solving a problem – we just create a problem!
- Abraham was to become the father of the people of God - but not through Ishmael...
  - God did not even recognize Ishmael as a son of Abraham - **Genesis 22:2**
  - The descendants of Ishmael were not the chosen people - they were not Israel...
  - In fact - Ishmael is never even mentioned by name in the New Testament!
  - The picture being - God does not recognize a work of the flesh...
  - Those who try to fulfill the promises of God in the flesh - are not the children of God!

- **2ND – AN UNAVOIDABLE CONCLUSION… VS. 4-6** (5 POINTS)

o 1st - Hagar – when she became pregnant despised (*looked down*) on Sarai... vs. 4
- Likely Hagar realized that Sarai considered the baby her own…
- Like any mom – Hagar saw the baby as HERS alone...
- Perhaps Hagar even felt she was the better wife for Abram – she could have kids…
- Therefore - she despised Sarai because of the baby and because of Abram!

o 2nd - Sarai – took it out on Abram – my wrong be upon you (*this is all your fault*) … vs. 5
- Sarai felt the scorn of Hagar – and perhaps the shame of being barren...
- Rather than admitting this was all a terrible Idea – Sarai passes the blame...
- The Lord will judge between you and me – (*He will make you pay for doing this to me*)!
- So many times - when we fail – we want to blame anyone but us…
- If we take the blame – then it means that we have to change…
- It means we did something wrong - and need to repent and make it right…
- But it is far easier to just pass the blame onto someone else…
- Then we do not have to do anything – it was not our fault (*or all at least all our fault*)!

o 3rd - Abram – said she is YOUR servant – do with her what you like... vs. 6
- Abram was no better than Sarai – and just as much to blame...
- Rather than taking responsibility – he reminds Sarai Hagar is HER servant…
- Abram took the easy way out – and put the blame on Hagar!
- If we choose to follow the idea of someone else – and it does not go well…

- They are not to blame – we were the ones who decided to follow them!
- 4th – Sarai dealt harshly (*piel*) with Hagar… vs. 6
  - Harshly – intensive / causative – she was REALLY hard on Hagar – driven by bitterness!
  - In response - rather than facing her part in all that had taken place – she ran away…
  - Her solution was to try and hide – but instead found herself in the wilderness!
  - Another way we deal with the consequences of a poor choice – run away…
  - Rather than facing the responsibility for our actions we hide from them…
  - Sometimes this means moving to a different place / new friends / new faces…
  - Sometimes it means hiding in a TV or alcohol...
  - Ultimately this never works – the Lord loves us too much to let it work…
  - We may avoid a problem for a while – but it will only come back again…
  - Even in some far away place – we are still there…
  - When we turn off the TV or sober up – we will still be there…
  - We cannot run from ourselves – therefore the problem will come back!
- 5th – The unbreakable connection…
  - Sarai *said* – Abram *listened* – Sarai *took* Hagar – *gave* her to Abram – Abram *went*…
    - Hagar *conceived* – Hagar *saw* she had a child – Hagar *despised* Sarai…
    - Sarai *said* judge (*choose*) – Abram *said* do what you will – Sarah *dealt* harshly with Hagar…
    - Then Hagar *fled* from the presence of Sarai and Abram!
    - All seven of these VERBS are connected in the Hebrew – sequential imperfect…
    - Meaning the moment Sarai opened up her mouth – the conclusion was unavoidable!
  - No one was innocent when it came to this this debacle of - helping out God!
    - Abram had set a bad example – Hagar in pride had grown to despise Sarai…
    - But Sarai is the one who started the process – her words led them all down a dark path!
    - Wives – never underestimate the power you have over your husbands…
    - Although it is the responsibility of the Husband to lead – he can easily be turned…
    - Peter tells us that wives should have an a gentle – we would say MEEK – spirit…
    - Meekness means having power – but not using it – instead depending on Jesus!
    - **I Peter 3:4** – "The incorruptible beauty of a gentle [meek] and quiet spirit…"

- **3RD - FINDING GRACE… VS. 7-16** (3 POINTS)
  - 1st - The Angel of the Lord met Hagar there and asked her... vs. 7-9
    - Where did you come from – in other words – what have you done…
      - God was holding Hagar accountable for her actions…
      - God knew that running from her problems would not solve anything!
    - Where are you going – in other words – what will you do next...
      - Hagar had no idea where she was going – she was just running away…
      - She could not run forever – at some point she had to face the consequences!
    - Go back (*command*) and submit (*command*) to Sarai…
      - How do you stop running – go back to where you ran away from…
      - When we make poor choices – the only answer is to face the consequences…
      - It may not seem like a pleasant idea – but when we humble ourselves...
      - It opens up the door for God to pour out His Grace into our lives – **James 4:6 / I Peter 5:5**
  - 2nd - God gave Hagar three promises... vs. 10-12
    - You will have more descendants than you can count...
      - Her son would be the son of Abram – therefore he received the promise too…
      - Her son would have more children than could be counted...
      - God here shows Hagar Grace – she did not deserve the blessing / the promise…

- But that is what Grace is all about – getting what we do NOT deserve!
- Only the Lord can take a poor choice – and turn it into a blessing…
- He can take a life that had nothing left but ashes – and make it beautiful!
- **Isaiah 63:1** – "Beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair."

▪ You will have a son – Ishmael (*God will hear*) – for God heard about you…
- I am sure at this point she felt very alone – isolated – abandoned…
- Hagar was given the comfort the God heard about her!
- When we run from our consequences – we are really running from the Lord…
- We do NOT want to hear from the Bible – or pray – because we are reminded…
- When we humble ourselves – we find that the Lord is there and listening!

▪ Your son will be wild (*donkey*) – he will be against everyone and they will be against him…
- There was no promise that her son would be easy to raise…
- They were going to have a tough life submitting to Sarai – but God would be with them!
- **Galatians 6:7** – "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."
- The consequences of our actions do not always go away...
- If we rob a bank – God will forgive us – but we will still go to prison…
- But when we stop blaming others – stop running away…
- We will find that even thought things might seem tough – the Lord is with us!

o 3rd – The one who sees… vs. 13-16
▪ She called the name of the place – *Beer Lahai Roi* - the well of the God who sees…
▪ For she said – I have seen the God who sees me!
▪ Hagar returned to Sarai – and had a son – Abram named him Ishmael…
▪ Abram was 86 years old when he was born!

- **4TH - 25 YEARS LATER… VS. 1-2** (4 POINTS)

o 1st - The LORD appeared to Abram… vs. 1
▪ There were long gaps between times when God spoke to Abram – years!
▪ I do not know about you – but I get impatient if I have to wait for an hour…
▪ I cannot imagine waiting for the Lord fulfill His promise – for years!
▪ But if the Lord gives us a promise – He will not go back on His Word…
▪ Even if we do not see Him working – even if we do not hear from Him…
▪ That does not mean that he will not be faithful to do the work!
▪ **II Corinthians 1:20** – "All the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen…"

o 2nd - He said – I am Almighty God - El Shaddai (*first time in OT*) … vs. 1
▪ God makes clear in His title that nothing is impossible for Him…
▪ He is about to reconfirm promises to Abram that are impossible...
▪ But that is not a problem because he is the God of the impossible!
▪ There is no circumstance to difficult – or problem to overwhelming for God…
▪ He turns sinners into saints – the week into the mighty – the lowly into the great…
▪ The only thing that limits God – is us WAITING on and TRUSTING in him!

o 3rd - Walk before me blameless… vs. 1
▪ Walk – hithpael imperative – commanded to cause yourself to walk before me…
▪ Abram had a rough patch with the Ishmael debacle…
▪ God is now going to reconfirm the covenant – do the impossible – give him a son…
▪ But he had a part to play – he was to CHOSE to WALK before the Lord in holiness…
▪ Stop following looking to the world – Egypt / Hagar – and put his FULL trust in the Lord!
▪ What does it mean to walk blameless – be fruitful and grow in our knowledge of the Lord!

- **Colossians 1:10** – "Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

o 4th – Confirming the covenant… vs. 2
- God promised to make a covenant with Abram – he would multiply exceedingly…
  - This was no accidental encounter – the timing was specific – it came to pass (*sequential*) …
  - God chose to wait till Abram was 99 years old before meeting with him again…
  - No doubt at a point when Abram and Sarai had lost ALL hope in having their own child!
  - Abram was 75 years old when the Lord first game him the promise...
  - Abram was 85 when he had Ishmael – tried to fulfill the promise himself...
  - Now almost 25 years after the first promise – the hope of a child had long faded!
- Often God will let things go far beyond our ability to handle them…
  - When God took the Israelites out of Egypt – He led them into a trap…
  - Mountains on the north and south – Egypt closing in behind – the Red Sea in front…
  - He let things get to the worst possible moment – before He acted!
  - Ever wonder why God did not act earlier – why wait till things got worse...
  - He does that just so that we can get to see Him do the impossible…
  - That is how we learn to trust in our God – El Shaddai!

- **5TH - A NEW NAME… VS. 3-6** (3 POINTS)

o 1st - Abram fell on his face – and God spoke with him… vs. 3-4
- He confirmed the covenant with Abram – he would be the father of MANY nations…
- For that reason - God would change his name…
- Abram – means *exalted father* / Abraham – means *father of many nations*!
- Sarai *princess* / had her name changed to Sarah *Queen* – **Genesis 17:15**
- Because from them would come NATIONS and KINGS!

o 2nd - God changed their names - in light of what He was going to do with them… vs. 5-6
- Even though Abraham was not the Father of ANY nation yet – one day he would be!
- Even though Sarai was not a Queen of ANY nation – one day her descendent would be!
- This is not the only place in the Bible where we see a change in name...
- The Apostle Peter (*stone*) was renamed by Jesus – from Simon (*heard*) – **John 1:42**
- Apparently - Peter was not so good at listening – he was a little more like a rock...
- The Apostle Paul (*little*) was renamed – from Saul (*strong*) – **Acts 13:9**
- When he was filled with the Holy Spirit – he went from strong to little!

o 3rd - The purpose of the new name is not just a nick name – it a new character!
- **Proverbs 22:1** – "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches..."
- Perhaps we have a bit of reputation – a name that is not very respectable...
- When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior we become new creations!
- **II Corinthians 5:17** – "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."
- We are no longer the same person with the same old definition – same old name
- We are now defined by Jesus – and one day we will get a name that matches!
- **Revelation 2:17 –** "I will give him... a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."
- We might think that we are not that different from what we used to be like…
- Yet Jesus does not see us as we are – He sees us the way we will one day be – perfect!
- He does not see us with the name we have – He sees us with the name He will give us!

- **6TH – THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT… VS. 7-14** (3 POINTS)

o 1st – An everlasting covenant… vs. 7-8

- God gave His covenant promise - He would always be the God of the descendants of Abram...
- And promises again - his descendants the land of Canaan as an eternal possession!
- But Abraham – and his descendants after him – had a part they had to keep – circumcision!

o 2nd – Circumcision… vs. 9-13
- The sign of the COVENANT would be that every male (*free or slave*) was circumcised…
  - God commanded that every male be circumcised on the 8th day after birth...
  - Medical science has found the 8th day is when it is the least painful and heals best…
  - As for the less painful part – at least the kids do not remember it!
- It was a symbol – meant to show an outward change reflecting the inward heart…
  - In other words - it was not just about the act of circumcision – that was a picture…
  - It was a about the cutting away the sinful desires of the heart!
  - **Colossians 2:11** – "When you came to Christ, you were circumcised, but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature."
  - Before we came to Jesus - we did what our sin wanted us to – we were slaves to sin…
  - We were bound and captive to the sinful desires of our heart – we did not know better…
  - We did not think about Jesus – how to live for Jesus – how to live a righteous life…
  - We did not trust in Jesus – we only knew how to trust in ourselves...
  - But when we accepted Jesus Christ – we died to that old sinful nature…
  - The sinful desires of our heart were cut off – so we were free to live for the Lord!
  - **Romans 6:6** – "Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin."
- Did you ever wonder why sins bother us now when they did not used to...
  - It used to be if we lied / or cheated / or were mean to others – it did not matter…
  - Yet now these things bother us – because we have been circumcised in our heart…
  - We are no longer bound to sin – but free to love and trust Jesus will all our heart…
  - That change of heart – circumcision of the heart – is the sign that we are a child of God!

o 3rd – Cut off… vs. 14
- Any male who was not circumcised would be cut off…
- They would become outcasts – no longer part of the covenant of God!
- In other words - cut off the sinful nature of our heart – or we will be cut off from God…
- If we are still acting like (*or worse*) than the world around us - where is Jesus...
- If we are wondering where our walk with the Lord is – **II Corinthians 13:5**
- Those who live in willful sin - ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit in our lives…
- **Galatians 5:19** – "Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

- **7TH – NOT ISHMAEL… VS. 15-22**

o 1st - God again promised to give SARAH a son... vs. 15-17
- Abraham laughed in his heart – can a man at 100 have a child – or a woman who is 90…
- The laughter in his heart was in disbelief of what the Lord had said…
- He just could not believe – now 25 years later – that he and Sarah could have a child…
- It was not that he did not want a child – he just did not think it was possible!
- Often when God give us His Word we laugh inside thinking – that is a nice thought…
- But we really are thinking that it is impossible - it just cannot happen!
- Maybe God has promised to take care of our needs – and we think how…
- Or He promises if we wait on Him - He will give us a godly spouse – but when…
- And we just laugh inside – thinking it just cannot happen!

o 2nd - May Ishmael live before you... vs. 18
- Abraham offered his own efforts to the Lord – but God refused them...

- Abraham was willing to settle for second best - God was not!
- God was going to do exactly what He had promised – and that did not include Ishmael!
- Though for the sake of Abraham – God would bless Ishmael – give him 12 sons (*princes*)
- When the Lord tells us He wants to do a work – we tend to look at our ability…
- We think – well I cannot do much Lord – but I will give you MY best…
- But God does ask what we have to offer to Him (*Ishmael*)...
- He tells us what He has to offer to us!

o 3rd - This time next year Sarah shall give you a son… vs. 19-27

- His name shall be Isaac – laugher!
  - Taking a cue from Abraham response to the promise – God names his son…
  - Not only did God give Abraham a new name – and a new heart (*circumcision*) …
  - But He also gave to Abraham the promise – He gave him laughter – a son!
- That very same day Abraham circumcised all the men in his house...
  - No small undertaking – remember that there were 318 men old enough to go to war...
  - But with his new name and new heart – Abraham was quick to trust in the Lord!
  - God Almighty – *El Shaddai* – wants to do a work in our lives…
  - He does not see us as who we are – He does not see us as we see ourselves…
  - He sees us with a new name – He sees us as He what we will be by His Grace...
  - He changes our heart – cuts away the sinful desires of our heart...
  - Giving us a heart to love / serve / and trust in Him!
  - Then He gives us laughter – the promise – as He does the impossible in our lives…
  - All in His perfect time!