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## SG020109

# The Whole Counsel of God - Genesis 14-17

Got questions? Email Pastor Jason at [jasonduff7@gmail.com](mailto:jasonduff7@gmail.com)

(You can download this message as a pod cast by searching Jason Duff on I-Tunes)

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## Introduction & Overview of the Section

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### Introduction

We are working through the first section of the Life of Abraham. One of the most important characters in all of the Bible.

### Sailing the Seven “C’s” of Abraham’s Life – Genesis 12-17

#### #1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9

#### #2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20

#### #3 – His Consequences – Genesis 13

We covered these first three points in our first study which is available on our website.

[Calvaryvista.com](http://Calvaryvista.com)

#### #4 – His Courage – Genesis 14

After failing in faith in chapter 12 and experiencing the consequences in chapter 13, Abraham is most like Jesus in chapter 14 in risking everything to save unfaithful men and women.

#### #5 – His Comfort – Genesis 15

After Abraham’s great victory over 4 kings in chapter 14 he is discouraged that God has not yet fulfilled His promise to him in giving him a son. God speaks to Abraham, gives him an illustration of the stars and then initiates a covenant showing this will be all of God’s doing.

#### #6 – His Carnality – Genesis 16

Abraham once again fails in faith as Sarah his wife and he hatch a plan to fulfill God’s promise of a son in their own strength and plan.

#### #7 – His Covenant – Genesis 17

Abraham is promised once again that he will be the father of many nations and God signifies His covenant with Abraham with the sign of circumcision.

### Key Issues or Words

“Abraham believed God” (15:6) – “The original Hebrew for ‘believed’ comes from a root where we get our English word ‘Amen’. We might paraphrase it by saying that Abraham said “Amen” to the Lord.” - Griffith Thomas

“God Almighty” (17:1) – In Hebrew it is “El Shaddai” and it signifies God’s power and His sovereignty, which by the way, is exactly what Abraham needed to hear in that moment. God always meets us right where we need Him to.

### By the way...

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**Genesis 17:10 – “every male shall be circumcised”**– A recent report in USA Today from 8/20/12 stated, “researchers say falling infant circumcision rates could end up costing billions of U.S. health care dollars when men and their female partners develop AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and cancers that could have been prevented by circumcision.” When we will start to believe God has our best in mind?

## **Additional Notes**

(unless you want to stay 'til 10, we won't get to this)

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**Genesis 16:6 – The casting away of Hagar** – After Sarah erupts in anger when Hagar become pregnant, Abraham shows more weakness in doing nothing to protect the young mother. Again Abraham and Sarah are just following the common practices of the day. The Code of Hammurabi, Law 146 states, “if a concubine claims equality with her mistress because she bore children, her mistress may demote her to her former status.” Abraham goes again with what was common in that day and the result is no one looks good in this story. Sarah has gone with the cultural norm of the day and tried to help God out with His plan, Abraham weakly goes along with the whole deal and even Hagar doesn't seem to have a good plan as she is going to walk back to Egypt? What about trouble on the road? What would happen when she would get there with no home, and a half-breed baby in her womb? The only hero in the story is God who shows up to Hagar in the wilderness. Hagar here shows tremendous maturity. She is the only one in scripture who gives God a name (Genesis 16:13) and then she obeys right away God's word which she knows will be difficult. It is hard to see a hero in Genesis 16 other than the Lord!

## **Going Deeper**

(think it over yourself or discuss with the family)

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### **Questions to ask the younger kids....**

Read Genesis 14-17 – #1 - God comforts Abraham by telling him, “I am your exceedingly great reward”. What do you think it means that God is our reward?

#2 - God made a promise to Abraham that he would have a son. God blessed Abraham because he believed the Lord. In what ways can you trust God in your life?

### **Questions for the rest of us...**

#1 –Same question as number 2 above, but a little deeper... What things has God told you to believe Him concerning? How does believing God relate to obeying God?

#2 –In chapter 16 Abraham tries to help God out with His promise by taking matters into his own hands. How did that work out for Abraham? What can you learn for your own life?

#3 - Why do you think Abraham asked God to bless Ishmael, this work of the flesh in chapter 17? Would things have turned out any different if Abraham didn't ask God to bless his mess? Does that teach you anything in your life?

### **Further study...**

Psalm 110, Hebrews 5, and Hebrews 7 are all additional passages about Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God that Abraham meets in chapter 14. If you want to do further research about who you Melchizedek is, consider these passages. Was Melchizedek Jesus? Was he as type of Jesus and what is his importance to us today?

## **Homework 4 Next Week – Genesis 18-19**

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Read Genesis 18-19 – What can we learn about being hospitable from these chapters? What can we learn about the consequences our choices bring?

## Genesis 14-17

# “Sailing the Seven ‘C’s’ of Abraham’s life”

### Introduction

- Tonight we are going to continue our study in the foundational book of the Old Testament and really all of the Bible
  - Remember the content is not hard to remember, because the title says it all

### The word Genesis means “beginnings”

- And truly so many things in scripture have their beginning in the book of Genesis
  - The universe
  - Life in general
  - Man, marriage
  - Sin and evil
  - Language, government, nations
  - Specifically we will see the nation of Israel
- In fact understanding that this book means and is about beginnings really is a good way to divide up our look at this book as you can see in your book intro sheet

### Outline for the Book of Genesis

#### Chapters 1-11 – The Beginning of all nations

- Chapters 1-2 – The Creation
- Chapter 3 - 5 – The Fall
- Chapter 6-9 – The Flood
- Chapters 10-11 – The Tables of Nations

#### Chapters 12-50 – The Beginning of the Jewish nation

- Chapters 12-23 – Abraham
- Chapters 24-27 – Isaac
- Chapters 28-36 – Jacob
- Chapters 37-50 – Joseph

### Now last week we began our look at that second half of the book and the Life of Abraham

- This man the Bible devotes so much to in the Old Testament and the New
  - And we too need to understand what his life was all about
- And to do that we are working our way through the “Seven C’s of Abraham’s Life”
  - not seas as in Ocean, but “C’s” as in tonight is brought to you by the letter C

### Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life

#### #1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9

#### #2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20

#### #3 – His Consequences – Genesis 13

#### #4 – His Courage – Genesis 14

#### #5 – His Comfort – Genesis 15

#### #6 – His Carnality – Genesis 16

#### #7 – His Covenant – Genesis 17

- And last week we covered the first 3 on that list

### Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life

#### #1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9

- Abraham was told to get out of His country, to leave his fathers and relatives and go to a land that God would show him
  - He wasn’t told where it was

- He wasn't told how it would all work out
- He was just promised God would be with Him
- And Abraham obeyed and followed the Lord

### **Sailing the 7 "C's of Abraham's Life**

#### **#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

#### **#2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20**

- The Bible is honest about its heroes as we will see again tonight – Abraham did not trust, did not seek, and ended up in Egypt – God forgives, but there are consequences he will have to face

### **Sailing the 7 "C's of Abraham's Life**

#### **#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

#### **#2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20**

#### **#3 – His Consequences – Genesis 13**

- Abraham goes back to Bethel and is renewed in his walk with the Lord – great example for us – but just because Abraham was forgiven by God and restored back in his walk with God that did not mean that there were not consequences
  - There always are, that is why God tells us to run from sin
  - It will work things in our lives we don't want
- Abraham received much possessions in Egypt and that caused some division between the herdsman of Abraham and the herdsman of Lot – and Lot ends up losing his nephew that he has been traveling with for 20 years, more like a son
  - And what he lost him too was even worse
- For when Abraham gave Lot the choice of which direction to go, Lot choose Sodom, because it reminded him of Egypt
  - His heart had been affected by the choice of Abraham to head down to Egypt
  - And it would cause even more problems for Abraham as we will see tonight, starting with our next "C"...

### **Sailing the 7 "C's of Abraham's Life**

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- Up to this point in the story, lets be honest, we are not that impressed with Abraham

### **He does obey God and leave his homeland of UR – (but historically God may have been shutting down his hometown as well to help him out in this decision)**

- but he takes his time getting to Canaan
  - and once he is there at the first sign of trouble he bails out to Egypt, and has Sarah lie about who she is - Not really impressed!

### **But then we get to chapter 14 and we see a completely different side of Abraham**

- The setting is the five city states of Sodom and Gomorrah – these small towns by our standards that were surround by walls and ruled by a "King" decided to rebel against the regional powers that controlled them
  - Major powers of what is today Iran, Iraq and Turkey who influence things now and did all the way back to the time of Abraham
- These city states rebel and the regional powers send troop and they decimate these city states
  - And it would have been a great tragedy for those people caught in the middle of the political battle

**And Abraham who is about 20 miles away hears that these city states have been invaded, that the women and children have been taken as slaves, and the men have either been slaughtered or forced into slavery as well**

- and Abraham's reaction is truly this time impressive
  - He is beginning to act like the one God has given a responsibility of this land into
  - Just like his descendant David, who would not stand for such an invasion in his day, Abraham in this day, decides to get involved

**When Abraham finds out that Lot has been captured he arms 318 of his trained servants to go to battle**

- Now this gives us a better picture of who Abraham is
  - The Bible movies make it look like he, Sarah and two or three other guys are wandering through the wilderness – not so
- One of my favorites parts of touring Israel is a dinner toward the end of the trip at a place called Genesis land
  - You are greeted by Father Abraham who is from Australia and has a thick accent – so the guides don't really like it because it's not at all authentic, but
  - I love it because they serve this date honey BBQ chicken that is the best stuff I have ever had – it is worth the airfare to get over there just for this chicken
- But even though it is a wonderful dinner, and you get a picture of the hospitality of the people of Abraham's day and tent life
  - It really reinforces this picture because you have Abraham and Sarah and Eliezer his servant there and that is about it
  - This is what it must have been like in Abraham's camp – but that is not a real picture, though the camel ride is fantastic

**Abraham has a big enough company to arm 318 men**

- but even though he has 318 men this is still a tremendous act of faith
  - because no doubt as Moses and Joshua and Gideon would do after him – he is up against huge odds
  - some have suggested he is facing odds of 10 to 1 or more, thousand of soldiers from these regional powers

**But as we will see many times in the scripture – when God is in on your side, you have the majority**

- and God blessed Abraham's courage and faith and gave him a great victory over these four kings
  - Lot and all his possessions are saved as well as the people who lived in the valley of Sodom and Gomorrah
  - but what happens after the battle is even more interesting to me

**Abraham has an encounter with two kings after the battle**

- Melchizedek King of Salem which Psalm 76 links with Jerusalem, so you have the King of Jerusalem and the King of Sodom, this city state that was invaded coming to meet Abraham
  - These are very different guys and Abraham's dealings with them are different as well

**Abraham first meets with Melchizedek**

- now Melchizedek is one of the most interesting characters in all of the Bible
  - He comes out of nowhere, we are told he is a priest of the most high God, he brings bread and wine to Abraham and Abraham tithes to him

- Now this man would have been just an obscure character in the scriptures except for he appears again in Psalm 110

**“The Lord has sworn, and will not relent, “You are a priest forever, According to the order of Melchizedek.” – Psalm 110:4**

- David in Psalm 110 prophesies about the Messiah that He will be a from a different order of priests than the Levitical priesthood that will be set up in the book of Exodus and Leviticus
  - Messiah will be after the order of Melchizedek

**Then the book of Hebrews in the New Testament brings this guy up again and gives us even more information about him, it lets us know that he was....**

**“without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.” – Hebrews 7:3**

- And Hebrews also states that Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priests because the Levites paid tithes to Melchizedek due to the fact that they would come from Abraham – Abraham’s great great grandkids

**“Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.” – Hebrews 7:9-10**

- So someone who is so obscure in the book of Genesis comes up over and over again in the Bible and it has led to many discussions of who is this guy Melchizedek
  - Some say that He is an Old Testament appearance of Jesus
  - Some say no – He just represents Christ

**I personally lean that direction that he is a type of Christ, not actually Christ because of what we read in Hebrew 7:3 when it said, he is like the Son of God**

- **The phrase, “like the son of God” will not allow this because the Greek verb translated, “like” always assumes two distinct and separate identities.**
  - The son of God and Melchizedek are alike but two very separate persons
  - You are free to disagree, I don’t mind if you don’t mind being wrong, but...

**But the real amazing truth about this guy is so often missed as people argue about who He is because we know at the very least that Jesus is priest after the order of Melchizedek – we have a high priest in heaven who is superior to any high priest that ever lived on earth**

- He understands what we are going through because He lived on this earth for 33 years
  - He can intercede for us because He was without sin
  - And His priesthood in Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7 tells will last forever

**“Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” – Hebrews 6:20**

- We can come to Jesus anytime for anything, and He will be there for us forever, and cares about us
  - Glory

**So Abraham meets this priest Melchizedek who is I believe, a picture, or a type of Christ**

- and Abraham communes with Him
  - Abraham honors Him with the tithe
  - And I don’t want you to miss that because of what happens next

**The second King Abraham runs into is the King of Sodom**

- And this second King wants to make a deal with Abraham – which is really arrogant for a king who just got whooped and had to be saved by a wandering shepherd, but none the less the deal is suggested
  - Give me the people, you can take the wealth, you can have all the riches that you gained in the battle – I just want the people

**But we see here again Abraham's courage in that - He is trusting the Lord to take care of him as he says, I don't want anyone to be able to say, "I made Abraham rich" – He wants all the glory to be God's**

- Now this is a heavy thing to refuse, I mean yes Abraham was rich, but how much is enough money? – just a little more

**And for Abraham to turn this down, and not get locked in with this worldly King, which is the real issue here**

- well it took great courage, it took great faith
  - and I can't help but notice

**We are constantly tempted to buy into the world system**

- to link ourselves with worldly wisdom and direction
  - and we need like Abraham to say – no – I am linked with the Lord, not the world
  - but how do we get that kind of faith, that kind of courage

**Well don't let it escape your attention what Abraham was doing right before**

- He was communion with God
  - You just said you don't believe Melchizedek was Jesus – right, but he was God's priest, and in doing these thing with the priest of God, he was communing with the Lord
  - Just like we do when we gather here – no one is wondering whether I am Jesus or not – though I got an email last week from a parent who was talking to her young child about the elections and she said, "do you know who the President is" and this kid thought for minute and said, "Pastor Jason" – no thank the Lord
- Some little kids might think I am the President, no one thinks I'm Jesus – but when we are here together and getting into God's word – We are communing with God

**And if you and I want to stand against the world, we need to learn this lesson**

- the passions of the world will over take us, unless we have a greater passion
  - a passion for the Lord
  - a passion for communing with Him

**You know I am convinced, as I wrote in my book the Fundamentals of Walking with God**

- that the fundaments of reading the Word, spending time in prayer, communion, worship
  - these things are not legalistic laws that make God love you more or make your salvation secure
  - but they are essential to you becoming all the God desires you to be and not giving in the counterfeits this world has to offer
- The world and our enemy throws out all these things that we think we want
  - But when you really have the best, it can't compare
  - Its like the old hymn says – "turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of the earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace"

## **Turn to the Lord**

- Commune with Him – here, in the morning, whenever – and you will find victory becoming easier to easier to find!

## **Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life**

**#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

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**#5 – His Comfort – Genesis 15**

**And as we have said before, it seems often in Abraham’s life as it is with us, triumph is often followed by trial – you remember Elijah like we talked about on Sunday – trial often follows triumph**

- And you can imagine, after winning this great victory Abraham must have been thinking
  - What have I done???
  - I am new around here, I can’t really explain what I am doing except that God has called me to be here
- And now I have taken part in a war with 4 of the nations with huge armies
  - All I have is 300 soldiers, and God gave me a victory but what was I thinking
  - What if they decide I am a bother in the land and come after me????

**Whatever the speculation of what was going through Abraham’s mind, we can pretty much know that there were definitely trials following this triumph**

- and specifically trials of fear
  - How do I know that???
- Well in verse one God tells Abraham, **“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”**
  - God tells Abraham he does not have to worry
  - I will be your shield

**But the Lord declares, “Not only am I your shield, but I am your reward”**

- now Abraham’s response to this is telling, and it shows that there has to be some frustration building at the vast amount of time that has transpired between the promise of a son and the delivery of that promise
  - what shall you give me seeing I go childless is pretty bold of Abraham

**In that though as I mentioned in the study guide, if you look at the text Abraham still addresses God as Lord God**

- He is frustrated, He doesn’t understand what is taking so long and how it can possibly be that God is going to come through
  - But He still addresses God with respect

**I mention that because there will be times in your life you feel like Abraham, when you don’t understand what God is doing**

- and I hear from time to time that you just need to express yourself to God
  - get it out, I heard in one podcast I was listening that this pastor actually encouraged his congregation to give God the finger
  - oh no – church – I can’t believe I even have to say this
- God is your Father, He wants to hear your heart, but you need to be respectful – because He is God, He is far above you and your thoughts and your so called wisdom and understanding
  - Abraham give God respect with his concern



## **And Abraham says – well Lord I hear you, but what will you give me seeing I go childless**

- you see in that day who you passed your wealth onto was key
  - and Abraham still had no one
  - everything in that culture would have gone to his most prominent servant
  - so Abraham is disappointed a little bit
- But God says “No” – your servant will not be your heir
  - For I will give you a son
  - In fact your descendants will be innumerable like the stars of heaven

## **God even uses power point illustration, He takes Abraham outside and says can you number the stars, so your descendants will be**

- there is no indication that God is going to come through
  - there is no human way this is going to be accomplished
  - but what happens next is key, for verse 6 is repeated 3 times in the New Testament

## **Genesis 15:6 is quoted 3 times in the New Testament – Romans 4, Galatians 3 and James 2 – it obviously had a profound impact on New Testament thinking and writing**

- Verse 6 is one of the most important verses in all of the Bible

## **“And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” – Genesis 15:6**

- Abraham choose to believe God and take Him simply at His Word
  - And I say this is one of the most important verses in all of the Bible because again Paul and James use this verse over and over again to teach us how we are saved
- We are saved just like Abraham was saved, not by the law or works of righteousness that we have done
  - But we are saved by believing in the Word of God – of what God’s Word says about me and my sin and my condition and what I must do about that sin condition, respond to Jesus – if I will then just like Abraham, God accounts righteousness to us
- That word accounts means He just adds it to our account – for you advance students read Romans 4 in addition to discovering who Melchizedek is this week

## **God comforts Abraham in his sorrow and says all I have given you will not go to your servant, but I will give you a son**

- and Abraham believed the Word of God and for that Abraham was saved
  - but God was not done

## **He established this promise to Abraham by doing what was very customary in that day**

- When they would make a promise they would say, let cut covenant
  - And what would happen is sacrifices would be made and animals would be cut in two and you would walk between them basically saying this is what will happen to me – I will be cut in two if I don’t fulfill my part of the bargain
  - Any of you who had to buy a house know the process isn’t any better today
- But is something interesting I want you to notice about this deal, the promise God is making with Abraham
  - It is really one sided
  - Abraham tries his best, he gets everything in order, he keeps away the birds and what was suppose to happen is the two parties were suppose to meet in the middle, but instead Abraham goes into a deep sleep – and when he wakes up a

BBQ was waiting for him – God had been the surety of the covenant, not Abraham and Him in the middle

- And what God was saying – this is my promise – this is something I am doing in your life because I want to – this is a God thing

**And I just think someone here tonight needs to hear this, God has made promises and you have it in your mind that God is going to meet you in the middle – God helps those that helps themselves – Is Not a verse 5:16, right after cleanliness is next to godliness**

- we so often feel like God is leading and we think well then I need to make some great promises to God and keep my end of the deal
  - and listen, I do think we have a part, Abraham had to cut the animals, Abraham did keep the birds away
  - I think we need to obey, to put ourselves under the spout where the blessing pours out, to stay away from evil
- But outside of that, we think, how can I make God's will happen in my life, how can I take things into my own hand and meet God half way
  - Friend, some of you need to transition from a promise maker, to a promise believer – God I am going to believe that in your time and in your way – you will keep your Word to me!
  - We need to hear this because what we read next in the text is what not to do with the promises of God in our lives

**Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life**

**#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

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**#6 – His Carnality – Genesis 16**

- After all these wonderful promises in chapter 15, I wish the story just got better and better but it does not

**God has told Abraham you are going to have a son, and no doubt Abraham comes home once again reiterates the promise to Sarah**

- and personally I wonder if she is tired of hearing Abraham talk about these things
  - you know in her defense we are not told that God told her these things, God told her husband and she is just believing her husband, this fallible man she is married to
  - it must have been difficult and I wonder if Sarah had just had enough
  - So she decides she is going to help God out with His promise, she is going to meet God in the middle

**Sarah devises this plan – God has kept me from having children, Abraham I have a servant girl, why don't you have relations with her and we will raise the baby as our own**

- Now this sounds horrific to us in our culture, but the first thing we must understand it was a perfectly normal solution in those days
  - Again part of the class I'm taking is reading literature from Bible times outside of the Bible, to understand what their culture was like
  - What were they watching on ABC that was influencing their decision making
- Well we have found this from Babylonian writings of the day

**A Marriage Agreement - “If Gilimninu bears children Shennima shall not take another wife. But if Gilimninu fails to bear children, Gilimninu shall get for Shennima a woman from the Lullu country, a slave girl as a concubine. In that case Gilimninu herself shall have authority over the offspring.” – Nuzi Tablet #67**

**It was a normal cultural thing, that in the case of barrenness, you would get another wife for your husband, and raise that child as your own**

- So again, as foreign as it seems to us like Abraham going to Egypt to find food from last’s week’s study, it was the rational thing to do in that culture
  - But that is just it – so often we are faced with a choice and there are solutions that are totally normal for our culture, totally understandable to your friends
  - Your wife is not fulfilling your needs then find somebody else, get involved in pornography - If your husband is a jerk, leave him – that is what they do on Desperate Housewives – now I have never seen that show, so I speak but in ignorance, but I am assuming from the title that the show doesn’t teach Biblical models for marriage and relationships – just an assumption
- We can do things that are acceptable in our culture – but that doesn’t mean we have the heart of God
  - We must seek Him and get His heart

**Sarah suggests this normal thing of the day and of course Abraham puts up no fight, if this is what you think is best for our family sweetheart, well you know what a family man I am – dirtbag Abraham**

- Abraham goes into Hagar and she conceives and now things really heat up
  - I don’t know if Sarah expected Abraham to be the problem and thus unable to have kids and this was going to make her feel better
  - But when Hagar conceives and begins to look down on her, what wrong with you – Sarah loses her mind

**This is your wrong Abraham Sarah begins to say**

- We give the girls in the story a pass sometimes, but there is no hero in this story other than God
  - Sarah comes up with a plan, doesn’t ask God and when it doesn’t work out, she blames others
  - Sound like anybody you know girls?
  - Well not me – of course not
- We can all find ourselves somewhere in this story

**But the main point is Abraham and Sarah take things into their own hands, they are going to fulfill the promise of God and this never, ever works out good**

- Whenever we take things into our own hands and Ishmael is produced
  - A work of the flesh
  - And we all have them, not physical people, some of you do, but all of us have decisions we have made, choices we have taken and the product is an Ishmael
  - Not what to do when that happens, and what not to do, we see in our final section tonight
  - Let’s read chapter 17 and I will make a few closing comments

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## #7 – His Covenant – Genesis 17

- After the carnality of chapter 16, God re-establishes his covenant with Abraham in chapter 17

### **God establishes the Covenant with New Names and a New Sign**

- In Bible times they had great significance, it was not just something that was trendy or sounded good with your last name
  - A Name marked something in their birth (Jacob and Esau) – heel catcher and Hairy
  - Or it was prophecy as with Jesus, John the Baptist
    - Or sometimes a name was changed to mark major events in people's lives
    - Jacob becomes Israel – deceiver to governed by God
- We see this same thing in chapter 17

### **The first one is God reveals another name for Himself to Abram – verses 1-3**

- Abram is old – 99 years old
  - And as he gets to this age, what strikes me is He does not tell Abraham to retire
  - He tells him it is time to go higher
- But in order to do that, we continually need more revelation from the Lord

### **So God gives Him new Revelation**

- **A new name for God – Almighty God**
  - **The name means the “all powerful, all sufficient one”**
  - El Shaddi - The one who can deal with everything you are facing in your life

### **And it is interesting to me when God revealed this name to Abraham it was just when he needed to hear it**

- just before God was going to utter the promise of a son again
  - now that He was 99
  - now that His wife was 90

### **Abraham needed to hear that God was the all sufficient one**

#### **When Abraham was worried about war**

- God revealed Himself as His shield

#### **When Abraham was worried about missing out one reward**

- God revealed Himself as His reward

#### **Now that Abraham was faced with the impossible promise**

- God says “I am the all powerful one, the one who could do anything”

#### **The point is God is exactly what you need**

- To Moses – “Tell them I am that I am”
  - The becoming One
  - He is everything that we need

### **So God gives Abraham revelation, but with revelation comes responsibility**

- So God says to Abraham “walk before me and be blameless”
  - Some of your translations read, “perfect”
- That did not mean that He was perfect
  - For we will find He was not

### **That bums me out and blesses me at the same time**

- I will not be perfect, even at 99 (while I'll be in heaven)
  - But beside that I am blessed because even though Abraham wasn't perfect – He did learn to walk before God to be single focused

## **He was single focused**

- the whole idea in living is realizing God is watching you, His eye is before you
  - God gives Abraham more revelation about Himself and then He gives Abram a new name

## **Abram means “Exalted Father”**

- **Now God calls Him – Abraham which means “Father of many nations”**

## **This is God just doubling down**

- Abram would have been a tough name to have with no kids as it was
  - Where are your children, exalted father – oh it’s a promise
  - Now God has given me a new name – Abraham – father of many nations
- Every time he would have heard that name
  - Good morning – Father of many nations
  - Here is your lunch – Father of many nations
  - Good night – Father of many nations
- It would have reinforced the promised, and at times I’m sure, it would have caused more trouble in the heart

## **God speaks again and gives Abraham the promise**

- now understand it has been at least 13 years since the last time
  - we think God is speaking all the time to Abraham, but that is because his long life is compacted
  - 13 years have gone by, God reiterates the promise and Abraham does something we need to consider

## **Oh that Ishmael might live before you**

- God I know you have promised me a son
  - And I know I went out ahead of you with the whole Hagar thing
  - But can you just bless Ishmael
- Can’t you just bless my mess and work through that
  - Man – don’t we do the same thing

## **We take matters into our own hands, we move out ahead of the Lord and we create a mess**

- and then we ask the Lord, God I’m sorry I did this, I’m sorry I disobey, but can’t we just let bygones, be bygones, can’t you just bless my mess
  - an although God says No – To Abraham
  - he does say, I have heard your request and I will bless Ishmael
- And when you think about the world today, Ishmael is of course the father of the Arab people – you see the conflict in the middle East and I think – was it the best course of action for Abraham and his descendants to ask God to bless his mess
  - Now we don’t know the answer to the question
  - But I do know for you and me – don’t ask God to bless your mess

## **Well what am I suppose to do then, I didn’t ask God to marry this guy and I did, and now it’s a mess, are you saying I should leave him**

- no – I am saying now that you have gone your way and done your own thing, don’t keep doing it by coming again to the Lord and asking Him to bless your mess
  - we think prayer is talking God into our positions or seeing things our way, but really its reporting for duty
  - God not my will, but yours be done
- Two wrongs don’t make a right

- So instead of taking things into your hands again, if you have created an Ishmael through your decision, just leave it with the Lord
- For God is greater than your Ishmaels – God will later say to Abraham – take your son, your only son Isaac – God speaks as if Ishmael did not happen

**So God says, no, I am not going to work my plan through Ishmael, I will bless him Abraham because you have asked me to, but my plan and promises will come through yet to be born son Isaac- God reiterates the covenant - But now God adds one thing**

- the seal and the sign of the covenant
  - covenants often have signs – God gave Noah the sign of the rainbow – in our marriages our rings are the sign of the covenant – important to wear by the way – it’s a sign of a covenant
- Well God is going to give Abraham a sign
  - And I bet Abraham wishes he was getting the Rainbow
  - But God has something different
- The sign was circumcision
  - I know you really want to talk about this
  - And I have actually much to say about this, and you say, you can’t – such interesting things, but we will wait until next week as we see Abraham – a blessed life and Lot a blasted life – what was the difference between these two men...
  - So next time we will deal with circumcision, Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and his daughter, we will just deal with all of the uncomfortable stuff all at one time
  - But lets stand and pray