

First Southern Baptist Wednesday Night Bible Study - 11-20-19

The Covenant with Abraham Renewed/ Reaffirmed - Genesis 17:1-27

Introduction

1. 13 years have passed since Abram listened in impatience to Sarai
- verse 25, Ishmael is 13
2. Why does God wait?
-to test our faith
-to develop our patience
-to make His hand more plain
3. He is “God Almighty” in verse 1
-is anything too hard for Him? (18:14)

I. I Will Make Covenant (1-8)

1. Begins with a command - “walk before me and be perfect” (1)
-“perfect” means with all your heart
2. A name change - Abram to Abraham
Abram means “father” or “exalted”
Abraham means “father of many nations”
3. “Berit” (covenant) is used 13 times in nine verses
4. The same covenant, or something different? - expands ramifications
 - A. A confirmation or ratification of the covenant in 15, with the animal parts
 - B. A new or reaffirmed covenant
 - C. An unfolding covenant - stages
 - 1) New items
 - 2) The sign and seal of the covenant - circumcision
 - 3) New names
 - 4) In Gen 22, there is a divine oath after obedience
 - 5) As the faith of Abraham unfolds, so does the covenant
5. Four parts of the covenant
 - A. Father of many nations
 - B. Exceedingly fruitful
 - C. Multi-generational - even everlasting
 - D. Land
6. Restricted covenant but unrestricted blessing (20)
 - A. Through Israel, not all nations
 - B. Through Isaac, not all sons

II. This is My Covenant (9-14)

1. Circumcision
 - A. Speaks to the future
 - B. Speaks to building a great number of people - reproduction
 - C. As sign, not the covenant itself
 - D. The idea of circumcision, helps us understand the idea of baptism... into a new community, a new life
-circumcision set the nation of Israel apart as belonging to God

2. The “sign” of the covenant
 - like the rainbow for Noah
 - it was not in itself saving, - since those who were not right with God could be circumcised (Gen 34:15; Lev. 26:41; Jer. 9:25-26)
 - the covenant is open to Gentiles,... but they must be wholly committed - see 12b and 13
3. Instructions:
 - male at eight days old
 - seven days of uncleanness for the mom
 - breaking of this law was more than rebelling against community, but against God
4. Paul said that circumcision was permissible and even important at times (Acts 16:3) ... but was not saving
5. Note that “I will make covenant” - God initiates the covenant... He simply declares, this is the way it is going to be
 - circumcision had the effect of saying, okay we agree, we enter
 - in the New Testament when the Jews argue about “circumcision” you understand, that this (and the Sabbath) stood as signs of the covenant

III. As for Sarai (15-17)

1. Sarai to Sarah (15)
 - Old name is *Sarai* - contentious becomes Sarah, princess
 - New name is *Sarah* - mother of many nations
 - same name, but now regal
2. Sarah’s blessing (16)
 - a remarkable turn of events
 - *small but important... God’s covenant is with Abraham (4) but He blesses Sarah
3. Blessed at 21:1 -with her pregnancy
 - the interlude of Sodom and Gomorrah in chapters 18-19
 - the incident of Abraham and Abimelech in chapter 20
4. God speaks to Abraham about Sarah -here
 - the witnesses talk to her

IV. Abraham’s Response (17)

1. Abraham laughed (17)
 - Sarah laughs in chapter 18 (18:12)
 - Abraham laughs in worshipful joy - here
 - Sarah laughs in unbelief -18:12, but through faith she believed God is faithful (Heb. 11:11)
2. Abraham’s suggestion (18)
 - Ishmael
 - Abraham looks at what is, God looks at what will be
3. God reiterates His intentions
 - Intentions for Isaac
 - Intentions for Ishmael
 - 1) Blessing
 - 2) Fruitful

3) Twelve princes (just as Isaac gave twelve tribes) (20)

4) A great nation

BUT, my covenant

-blessing and covenant are not the same thing

This covenant is made with Abraham and descendants, the covenant with Noah is between God and all mankind -by contrast

V. Abraham Circumcises the Household (23)

-on the surface... obedience ...in faith

-meaning? - a sign of the covenant (outward sign of an inward covenant)

VI. Summary Statements (24-27)

1. Abraham was 99 years old when circumcised

2. Ishmael was 13 years old

3. All the men of the household