

FAMILY PLANNING PT. 2 | GENESIS 17:9-27 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 8/13/2023

I. *Fleshly Plans (16:1-6)* | II. *Escape Plan (16:7-16)* | III. *Master Plan (17:1-27)*

INTRO: Continuing from last week... Having Right Plans and Planning rightly is important!

- I. **FLESHLY PLANS (16:1-6)** – Sarai and Abram...The danger of Birthing Ishmaels!
- II. **ESCAPE PLANS (16:7-16)** – For Hagar and Ishmael. – Submission to God’s plan brings blessings.
- III. **MASTER PLANS (17:1-27)** – God’s Sovereign plans for Abraham and His descendants: God **REVEALED** His Name (1-3): *God Almighty!* Abraham was to *Walk Blamelessly before God!* – God then **RENAMED** Abram and Sarai, ensuring that His promises are sure! – God then **REAFFIRMED** the Land Covenant (7-8).

D. God REQUIRES (9-14) – CIRCUMCISION, which is the *surgical removal of a male's foreskin*. God mandated this for Abraham and all of the males in his household as a religious representation of the covenant God made with him (Gen 17:9–14; Acts 7:8).

1. **This Sign was to signify that they were different than others**, i.e., **distinct** because they depended on God to fulfill the promise, not themselves! Unfortunately, it became *mere ritual*, to those whose hearts did not belong to God. In (**Deut 10:16**), **God rebuked** the Hebrews, “*...circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.*”

2. **This sign was meant to be within their flesh (13)** – Later, God would desire to put *a New Spirit* within them (**Ezek 11:19-20**), that they would be His people, walk in His ways. – **As with NT believers**, we should cut-away the callous flesh from our hearts so that we can *be sensitive to the things of the Spirit!*

- Given that *the Eighth day* is when a baby's immune system is at its strongest for such an operation, it seems likely that God directed that children be circumcised on this day.
- Circumcision doesn't get us any closer to God: *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love (Gal 5:6)*.
- *W. Barclay said, “If a man is to be in special relationship with God, something far more is needed than a mark in his body. He must have a certain kind of mind and heart and character.”* – Real circumcision is devotion of Heart and Mind and Life to God!

P/A – Christians are to walk in obedience to God’s Commands. We should “**Cut Away**” anything that *desensitizes you* to the promises that we have in Christ Jesus, (**2 Cor 1:20**) says, *For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.*

E. God REPORTS (15-22) – “FOUR” SURE PROMISES for Abraham’s Family Plan... ha!

1. **His Wife SARAH would be Blessed (15-16)** – So far, all the blessings have been for Abraham and God’s purposes for his descendants, but now... God reveals **His favor towards Sarah!** Not a fleshly plan, but a promised plan to *bear a son* from her own body. – **NOTE:** Even though the fulfillment of what He promised **seemed impossible**, God would certainly do it! **He is God ALMIGHTY!**

- **Abraham's Response (17-18)** – *He fell on his face*...not for worship, but in **LAUGHTER!** Not mocking laughter, but Ecstasy and Elation. (*Picture the scene*) – Abraham laughed because he knew giving birth was impossible! – He was Overjoyed, but **still unclear** what the Almighty was reporting... *“Oh, that Ishmael might live...”* **Abraham found it hard to trust God for more than what he could conceive of** (*We are often no different!*) – But God quickly made it clear in (v.19) ... **NO!**

2. His Wife Sarah would bear ISAAC (19) – The name **ISAAC** means *“laughter,”* or *“he laughs.”* – *This is interesting, because there are **three different occasions of laughter** associated with Isaac's birth: **Abraham laughed for joy** when he heard his wife would give birth to the promised son (**Gen. 17:17**); **Sarah laughed in unbelief** when she heard the news (**18:9–15**); and **Sarah laughed for joy** when the boy was born (**21:6–7**).*

- **The Covenant would be established with and continued through Isaac.**

3. His Son ISHMAEL would also be Blessed (20) – God knew that Abraham loved his son Ishmael, **but he was not part of the Covenant!** God therefore *“heard”* Abraham's **Angst** as He did **Hagar's Hurting (v.11)**. God reported His Plan to bless and multiply him.

- (**Gen 25:12-18**) records the 12 princes of Ishmael, who have multiplied exceedingly, even today... as promised by God! – **Islamic traditions consider Ishmael to be the ancestor of Arab people** – **Muslims** also believe that **MUHAMMAD** was the descendant of Ishmael that would establish a great nation, as promised by God in the OT.

4. His Son ISAAC is the SON OF PROMISE (21-22) – God emphatically declares the **Covenant is with Isaac!** (*Not Ishmael*). And *Isaac would be born of Sarah within a year!* Then God vanished from Abraham's presence. (*Talk about a Prophetic Family Plan! Whew*)

F. Abraham's RESPONSE (23-27) – Abraham immediately **OBEYED THE LORD** and circumcised all of the males. This took great faith because **he was 99 years old!**

- **Take note that Ishmael was 13**, right about the time when rebellion would arise in his life, **as with many teens!** But his rebellion would not be against his father Abraham, but against the *“son of promise,”* his brother Isaac. **Stay tuned... more to come!**

CLOSING THOUGHT: This is God's Master Plan in the works. We can read it, but are we learning from it? *God has a perfect plan and what He plans is the **best for us and our families and the nations.*** But mankind has generally chosen to reject God and His plans. **DO YOU TRUST GOD PLANS FOR YOUR LIFE?**

There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand!
(Prov 19:21)