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January 2025 memory verse (NKJV)

Luke 24:45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

Commentary Genesis Chapters 17 by Chuck Smith 1.22.25

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old (Gen 17:1),

So this is another thirteen years later.

the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am Almighty God (Gen 17:1);

El Shaddai. So here is the first term use of the term Almighty God, El Shaddai.

walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly (Gen 17:1-2).

Now we passed over the sixteenth chapter but let me point out that at this point, Abraham and Sarai were trying to help God out. God promised He's going to bless Abraham, make his seed like the stars of the heaven, can't count them. And so Sarai comes with an alternate plan. Hey, Abraham, you know, looks like we're not going to make it, I'm getting so old and all, why don't you just take my handmaid at this point and you know, raise up a son through her and all.

And it was really a lapse of faith in the promise of God. So Abraham's faith was not a perfect faith. It wasn't a-he wasn't a perfect man. His faith wasn't complete. So don't worry if your faith is not complete. Don't let Satan hassle you. Believing in Jesus Christ is really the important thing.

"I'll make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of many nations. Neither shall thy name be called any more Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham (Gen 17:3-5);

Rather than high father, father of many nations, Abraham.

for the father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give

unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Gen 17:5-8).

God is now repeating the promise of giving him a large number of descendants and of giving to them this land forever. It's theirs. It belongs to them.

And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between you and me and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised (Gen 17:9-10).

And so here is where God established the rite of circumcision, which became, of course, the most important rite as far as the Jews were concerned. It is a badge and a mark of the people that have been separated unto God. And the spiritual significance is that of people who have cut off the fleshly life and are living after the Spirit. Now they made the mistake, as people so often do, concerning rituals as identifying the ritual for the reality.

The reality is a matter of heart. God wanted a people that were separated from their flesh in their heart. People who were spiritual and spiritually minded who would serve God in the Spirit. It was to be symbolized by the cutting away of the flesh. But it was really a spiritual thing that God was seeking people who would cut away the fleshly mind and the fleshly heart and would serve God in the Spirit. But they began to identify the physical rite for the reality of the experience of the heart and thus made the physical rite totally meaningless.

So if you would go through the rite of circumcision and yet still within your heart were living after your flesh, walking after the flesh, the fact that you had gone through the rite meant nothing. Now if you had gone through the cutting away of the flesh in the heart, then again the rite meant nothing. For God was really searching for the heart and the work in the heart. Same with baptism in the church.

For many it's become a meaningless rite. They think, "Well, the important thing is go down and be baptized". Baptism doesn't save you. Not that that is the washing away of the filth of the flesh. You can go down and be baptized a dozen times and not be saved. The rite of baptism doesn't save. It's the inward work of the Spirit within your heart that really counts.

And so here God established an outward rite which was to speak of an inward experience, the cutting away of the fleshly heart, the heart after the flesh and it was to be God desired that people whose heart was after the Spirit and after Him. And so here is where the rite was established and God ordered it for all of His children, all that were in his house, all of the servants, all of those that have been brought into the house of Abraham. It was something that was to be done unto Abraham and to his descendants after him on the eighth day of the male child. The rite of circumcision was to be fulfilled.

Commentary Genesis Chapters 17 by Chuck Smith 1.22.25

And God said to Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be (Gen 17:15).

So it's like change in her name. Name Sarah means princess. That's a good name for a wife, fellows. You might start calling your wife Princess. It's a beautiful name.

And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yes, I will bless her, and she shall be the mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her (Gen 17:16).

Here is God saying, Hey, I'm going to bless her. I'm going to make her the mother.

And Abraham fell on his face, and he laughed (Gen 17:17),

Now his was not a laugh of incredulity, his was a laugh of excitement. All right, you know, and it was just laughter of joy for this promise of God. Now later on, Sarah laughed but hers was a laugh of incredulity. Ah, you know, me? An old woman? Shall I have the joy of bearing a child? And she laughed because it seems so incredulous.

And so the Lord rebuked her. Why did Sarah laugh? Oh, I didn't laugh. Oh yes, you did. So Abraham laughed out of just the sheer joy of the whole thing and she laughed because it seems so incredulous. So it's only right that when the child is born that they should name him Laughter. Isaac, it means laughter. It's a very fitting name because they both laughed at the prospect of in this age of life, having a son.

And so Abraham fell on his face and laughed

and he said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God (Gen 17:17-18),

Now this is sort of a lapse in faith.

O that Ishmael might live before thee (Gen 17:18)!

In other words, Oh God, forget it. You know, Sarah is ninety and I'm a hundred. Just, that's all right, Lord. Let Ishmael, thirteen years old now, let him live before you.

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac, [Laughter]: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him (Gen 17:19).

So that Ishmael was not to be the recipient of this covenant and of the land but rather Isaac. So in reality the land does not belong to the Arabs by the covenant of God, it belongs with the descendants of Isaac.

As for Ishmael, I've heard thee (Gen 17:20):

You said let Ishmael live before you. All right.

I have blessed him, I will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto you at this set time next year. And the Lord left off talking with him, and God went from Abraham. And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house (Gen 17:20-23),

And they went ahead and followed the command of God in the rite of circumcision.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old, when they went through this rite (Gen 17:24).

²⁵ And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

²⁶ In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

²⁷ And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.