

(Genesis) Genesis 17:1-4

by J. Vernon McGee

God's covenant with Abraham is the key to understanding the entire Bible, as it involves a seed and a land, and reveals God's character as the Almighty God.

Duration: 5:57

Scripture: Genesis 17:1-2, Genesis 17:4-5, Genesis 17:7-8, Genesis 17:19

Topics: "Covenant Theology", "Abrahamic Promise"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Genesis 17, which is considered a significant chapter in the book of Genesis. God appears to Abraham for the fifth time to make a covenant with him and reaffirm the promise of a son. The preacher emphasizes that this covenant rules out Ishmael as the promised child. The sermon also highlights the spiritual significance of Abraham's descendants, including believers, the nation of Israel, and even the Arab people. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, which was made four thousand years ago.

Transcript

Now, let's come back here to this seventeenth chapter in view of the fact it's such a remarkable chapter and as we've said, a great many actually feel that this is the outstanding chapter of the book of Genesis. Well, God here makes this covenant with Abraham and changes the name of Abram to Abraham and God also confirms his promise to Abraham about a son. He lets him know that Ishmael is not the one that he had promised him.

Now, in one sense, this chapter is the key to the book of Genesis. It actually may be a key to the entire Bible. God's covenant with Abraham concerns two important items here, a seed and a land, and God reveals Himself to Abraham by a new name, El Shaddai, the Almighty God, and also He gives Abraham a new name and I've been calling him first Abram and Abraham, but up to this point, actually, his name was Abram.

Now it's changed to Abraham. Abram means high father and Abraham means father of a multitude. Ishmael is not the son God promised Abraham.

That is the thing this chapter makes very clear. Now let me come to chapter 17 and read in your hearing. And when Abram was 90 years old and 9, think of that, he was 86 years old when Ishmael was born and it was not until about 13 years later, well, in fact, it was 14 years later when Isaac was born.

When Abram was 90 years old and 9, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am El Shaddai, I am the Almighty God, new name. Walk before me and be thou perfect. This is the picture that's given to us.

And I will make my covenant. And 13 times in this chapter we find the name covenant and in 27 verses for that to appear 13 times obviously means God's talking about the covenant. That is very important.

Listen to him now. And I will make my covenant between me and thee and I will multiply thee exceedingly. Now this is God's fifth appearance to this man.

Not only his fifth appearance to this man, but now he comes not only to make the covenant, but to reaffirm the promise that he has made, which absolutely, of course, rules out this boy Ishmael. And I'm not sure, but that's one of the very important reasons why it was like that. Now you find that Paul, writing in the fourth chapter of Romans, the 19th verse, he said this.

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. Now Sarah's womb actually was a tomb. It was the place of death.

And out of death came life. Isaac was born. And Paul concludes that fourth chapter by saying, he says he was delivered for our offenses.

He was raised again for our justification. Life out of death. And that is the promise now God is making to this man.

He is 99 years old. And that means that Sarah was 89 years old. When Isaac was born, Abraham was 100 years old, Sarah 90.

Now God goes on to say, 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 a father of many nations. You'll be a father of many nations. Now we have here the father of many nations.

I suppose that it could be said that he's probably had more children than any other man that's ever lived on the earth as far as we know. Just think of it. For 4,000 years, two great lines.

The line of Ishmael, the line of Isaac. And there have been millions in each line. What a family.

What a homecoming. And added to that, there's a spiritual seed. And we are called the children of God by faith in Christ.

And Paul in Romans 4.16 says, speaking of Abraham, says, who is the father of us all? That is, of believers, and also of the nation Israel, and also of the Arabs, by the way. Just think of the millions of people. I tell you, this man here, God says, I'm going to make you a father of many nations.

Now, God's made that good. This thing was said 4,000 years ago.

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