**SDG – Genesis – Lesson #11**

**Chapters 17 -18**

Word Study: **God Almighty / El Shaddai**

We begin our study this week with another name for God; God Almighty. Beginning with the Greek Septuagint, El Shaddai has been translated: El – God, Shaddai – Almighty. The actual meaning of Shaddai is actually unknown. Shaddai is very similar to another Hebrew word which means “mountain.” The name El Shaddai is most commonly found in passages that speak of God’s blessing, fruitfulness, power to destroy or judgment. Mountains were seen as objects of strength and endurance. El Shaddai speaks of God in terms of His enduring strength to do that which man would consider impossible. Have you ever felt or faced a problem that seemed too big for you? Call on El Shaddai the Almighty God with enduring strength.

**Chapter 17**

1. God told Abram to “walk before me.” What does this mean? Who else had walked with/before God? (Genesis 5:21-24; 6:9)

To walk before God is to live a life of faithfulness to God’s Word. Both Enoch and Noah walked with God.

2. What does it mean to be “blameless?”

Blameless is synonymous with integrity. A person who is blameless is someone who can be counted on to do what is right.

3. Why did Abram need to be blameless and walk before God? What is the implication of this?

God said that Abram needed to do these things so that He could make a covenant with him and bless him. There is a conditional element to the covenant. It is not one sided.

4. What did the name Abram mean? Abraham? Why the change?

Abram meant “exalted father.” Abraham means “Father of many

nations.” Abraham is a fitting name for the covenant recipient. God

promised to make him the father of many nations.

5. “I will make you into nations.” Notice the plurality found in this statement. Compare this to Matthew 28:19-20 and Genesis 12:3; 25;1-2. What is God promising?

It would appear that this is a two-fold promise.

1. Abraham would literally be the ancestor of multiple nations through his sons Isaac, Ishmael, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah (see Genesis 25:1-2).
2. Abraham would be the father/ancestor of the Christ who would bring salvation to all people.

6. What was the nature of this covenant in terms of :

A) It’s duration – it was an everlasting covenant

B) God’s responsibilities – God would be God to Abraham and his offspring

7. What is an “everlasting covenant?”

It is a covenant that remains for as long as both parties are willing to abide by it.

8. What additional promise came with this covenant? (vs. 8)

Abraham’s descendants would inherit the land of Canaan.

9. While verses one through eight speak of what God would do within the covenant, verse nine begins to identify what Abraham is supposed to do. What is the first responsibility laid on Abraham and his descendants? (vs.9)

Abraham and his descendants were to be obedient.

10. What was the second responsibility?

Abraham, his sons, his men, and his descendants were all supposed to be circumcised.

11. There is some great symbolism involved in this act. First, let’s deal with the timing. When was this act to be carried out?

Abraham was to immediately circumcise himself, his son and all his men. From that time on, all males were to be circumcised on the

eighth day.

12. Now let’s look at why this time frame may have been set up. What did God do on the first six days of creation?

He created.

The seventh day?

He rested.

What happened on the eighth day?

It was the beginning of a new week. Adam and Eve began to work and live within the parameters of what God had established.

When was Christ crucified (what day)?

Christ was crucified on the sixth day, Friday.

What occurred on the next day?

Christ’s body rested in the tomb.

What happened on the eighth day?

Christ rose and a new covenant, the Gospel Covenant, began.

What is the symbolism of the eighth day circumcision?

It symbolizes a new beginning of life within the covenant.

13. What was the act that made the circumcision complete?

The foreskin was cut away.

This also has great symbolism. What was it a sign of? Why?

Since the male organ is the avenue by which the seed of life is introduced into the world it is the object of the Circumcision act. The old way of life is cut away. A new way of life begins.

What was to be done, if someone refused to be circumcised? Why?

In keeping with the symbolism of circumcision, if someone refused to cut away the old life they were to be cut off from the people.

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-20. What ultimately did the circumcision represent?

It represented a change of heart. A heart that has had the old way cut away.

14. Was circumcision God’s way of establishing racial purity? Why or why not?

Circumcision had nothing to do with race. All of Abraham’s men were to be circumcised. Therefore, they were all, though of different races, children of the covenant.

15. Verse 15 marks another shift in the covenant. The focus now goes to Sarai. What doe Sarai mean? Sarah? Why the name change?

Sarai means my princess. Sarah means princess. Since the covenant involves many nations it was appropriate for Sarah’s name to go from the singular to the plural.

16. What special promise was made concerning Sarah?

She would have a son who would be great.

17. How did Abraham first react to this news? Why? (vs. 17)

Abraham laughed because he was 99 years old and Sarah was 90.

18. What was Abraham’s second reaction? (vs. 18)

Abraham suggested that God bless Ishmael and use him to fulfill the covenant.

19. What does the name Isaac mean? Why did God give Abraham’s son to-be-born this name?

Isaac means laughter. Every time that Abraham called his son by name he would be reminded that he had laughed at God’s promise and would remember that He truly is El Shaddai.

20. Abraham obviously loved Ishmael. What did God promise concerning Ishmael?

Ishmael would also be blessed. He would father 12 princes and become a great nation.

21. How did Abraham respond to all the words of the covenant? (vss. 22-27)

Abraham circumcised himself, his son and all his men.

**Chapter 18**

22. Who were the three men who came to Abraham? (see also 18:10, 17, 20 & 22; 19:1)

It was the LORD and two angels.

23. Abraham was a man of faith, respect, humility, servant-hood and hospitality. How did he show these traits?

Vss. 2, 6-7 - He gave prompt attention to the visitor’s needs.

Vs. 2 - He bowed low before them.

Vss. 3 & 5 - He called one of them “my Lord,” while calling himself a servant.

Vss. 3 - 5 He acted like it was a favor to be allowed to serve.

Vs. 4 - He brought water to wash their feet and refresh them.

Vss. 5 - 8 He prepared a big meal for them.

Vs. 8 - He stood while they ate, an act of servant-hood & humility.

24. When else had the LORD appeared to Abraham?

12:7 - At Shechem when he entered the land.

13:14-17- After he and Lot separated.

15:1-21 - After saving Lot and meeting Melchizedek.

17:1-22 - When God instituted the covenant and circumcision.

25. What new promise did the LORD bring to Abraham and Sarah?

The LORD promised that within a year Sarah would give birth to a son.

26. What is meant by the phrase, “the way of women had ceased to be with Sarah?”

Sarah was no longer having a menstrual cycle; therefore she was no longer fertile.

27. What is meant by the phrase, “Shall I have pleasure?”

This is the joy or pleasure of having a son through whom the inheritance would pass.

28. Both Sarah and Abraham laughed at God’s announcement. How did God respond to this? (vs. 14)

The LORD reminded them of who was making the promise. He asked “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” It’s a rhetorical question, obviously nothing is too hard for the Creator for El Shaddai, the One of enduring strength!

29. Why did the LORD share with Abraham what He was going to do with Sodom and Gomorrah? (vss. 17-19)

Abraham was to do what was righteous and just. This is a test of Abraham’s righteousness.

30. If God has omniscience (all knowing), why did He need to “go down to see” what was happening in Sodom?

While God knows everything, He also is righteous. By personally going down and bearing witness in the flesh, He also had a personal testimony against the people. No one could say that they hadn’t personally acted against God.

31. What was the basis for Abraham’s bargaining with God?

God had pointed out Abraham’s need for righteousness and justice. Abraham questions God on whether it was righteous to destroy both the righteous and the wicked.

32. What do we learn about God’s righteousness and justice?

God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked. God will certainly judge the unrighteous.

33. What is meant when Abraham says, “I am but dust and ashes?”

Abraham was a man. Mankind was created out of the dust of the ground. Abraham was a sinner and deserving of the fires of hell (i.e. ashes). This is an honest evaluation of his standing with God. He in no way tried to elevate himself or bring God down.