

Lesson Two – Genesis 15-17 (Covenant; Ishmael; Promise of Isaac)

Chapter 15 – Yahweh’s Covenant with Abram

1. Vs. 1 says “After these things...”. Why do you think God would need to tell Abram at this point, “Fear not,” when Abram had just defeated Five Kings with 318+ men in Ch. 14?
2. Read vv. 2-6. Who does Abram claim as his heir? How does Yahweh answer Abram? How is Abram’s reaction to this described? Thought Question: What does it mean that Yahweh “counted it to Abram as righteousness”? cf. Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-26; Chapter 4; Galatians 3:6-9, 26-29
3. Read vv. 7-20. First time the word “covenant” is used to describe the promises of Yahweh to Abram (Gen. 12). What is a “covenant”? (especially examine in your studies Ancient Near Eastern [ANE] customs) Why were animals cut into “halves” and why did Yahweh (smoking fire pot and flaming torch) pass between the pieces? What did this symbolize in ANE culture? cf. Jeremiah 34:8-22

Chapter 16 – Sarai, Abram, Hagar & Ishmael’s Birth

4. How many years had passed since Abram entered Canaan? What plan does Sarai hatch to produce offspring for Abram? Think: Was this necessarily a “lack of faith” considering ANE custom re. a childless man (see 15:4)?

5. What happened to cause Hagar to flee from Sarai? Who found Hagar in the wilderness? What does he tell her to do and what does he promise her? What great lessons are to be learned by us today from vv. 13-14?

Chapter 17 – The Covenant & Circumcision; Isaac’s Birth Promised

6. V. 1 – What does God always expect of man in relationship to Him? Read vv. 2-8. What parts of the covenant are emphasized in these verses? Note: Yahweh calls it an “everlasting” covenant and Abraham’s offspring possessing Canaan as an “everlasting” possession. Does this Hebrew word translated “everlasting” mean “endlessness; eternal; never ending”? See Special Study on the Heb. word *olam* in the attachment.
7. Read vv. 9-14. What does God command Abraham to do to “keep” Yahweh’s covenant with Abraham and his offspring? Yahweh calls it a “sign of the covenant between Me and you.” What does this mean? What was to be done to any male who did not do this? Why?
8. Read vv. 15-21. What does God promise to Abraham and Sarah? How does Abraham react to this promise? How does this reaction factor into his son’s birth? What is Ishmael promised? What is the son of Abraham and Sarah promised?