

SOME TIME LATER

CCJAX Arena Sunday AM (7.14.19)

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[GREETING]

- The Whole Story – Monthly Theme: **COVENANT**

[READING/SCRIPTURE]

Genesis 15:1-18 (NLT) - The Lord's Covenant Promise to Abram

Some time later, the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.”

²But Abram replied, “O Sovereign Lord, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since you’ve given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. ³You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.”

⁴Then the Lord said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” ⁵Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!”

⁶And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith.

⁷Then the Lord told him, “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.”

⁸But Abram replied, “O Sovereign Lord, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?”

⁹The Lord told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. ¹¹Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. ¹³Then the Lord said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be

oppressed as slaves for 400 years. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. ¹⁵ (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) ¹⁶ After four generations **your descendants will return here to this land**, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

¹⁷ After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. ¹⁸ **So the Lord made a COVENANT** with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River.

This is a message for those of you who have lowered your expectation of what God might do.

One of the things God was doing in this covenant with Abram was **INCREASING HIS EXPECTATIONS** to get him on the level that God lives.

[TITLE]

- **“SOME TIME LATER”**

[PRAYER]

[INTRODUCTION]

Now... in order for you to fully understand and grasp all that is going on right here in **Genesis 15** as God strikes up this **COVENANT** with Abram... you really need to be caught up on the back story of Abram and his wife, Sarai.

- Names were changed later.
- They had a dream just like other couples to have children.
- Unfortunately they couldn't conceive.
- **[PAUSE] Have you ever noticed... Whenever you want kids and you can't conceive...maybe some of you have been there... it seems like everyone you know gets pregnant?**

- Then God speaks to them and challenges them to take a massive step of faith. It's recorded in **Genesis 12**.
- In **Genesis 12:2** God says to Abram, *"I'm going to make you into a **great nation**."*

Genesis 12 God calls Abram and makes a promise.
We jump forward to **Genesis 15**...

Genesis 15:1 (NLT)

Some time later, the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

[TRANSITION/TEXT]

I've come to the conclusion that... One of the most frustrating verses to actually live out in your own life can be found in **Genesis 15:1 NLT** - the first 3 words - **SOME. TIME. LATER.**

WHEN IS SOME TIME LATER?

Genesis 12 there is a promise.

Genesis 15 is some time later.

One decade passed between **Genesis 12** and **Genesis 15**.

- Some Bible scholars argue much longer than that.

Have you ever felt like you were stuck in "SOME TIME LATER"?

We can all imagine what Abram and Sarai are feeling.

- God where are you?
- God did I hear you right?
- Was it you or was that not you?
- God did you forget about me?
- From Abram's point of view nothing was happening.
 - And so Abram responds back to God in the middle of this SOME TIME LATER

Genesis 15:3-5 (NLT) - 10+ YEARS AFTER THE INITIAL PROMISE

³You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.”

⁴Then the Lord said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” ⁵Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!”

1. THE COVENANT IS ABOUT GOD’S FAMILY.

Abram (like typical humanity) is only thinking in **ADDITION**, but God was thinking **MULTIPLICATION**.

- We see this to be God’s heart early in civilization when he instructs Adam and Eve

Genesis 1:28 (NLT)

²⁸Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply.”

- Abram was willing to settle for the ADDITION of just ONE son.

IF GOD ALWAYS MET YOUR EXPECTATIONS THEN HE WOULD NEVER HAVE THE CHANCE TO EXCEED THEM.

Genesis 15:5 (NLT)

⁵Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!”

God had to change Abram’s perspective.

SOMETIMES OUR PROBLEM SEEMS SO LARGE BECAUSE OUR PERSPECTIVE IS SO SMALL.

A PROPER PERSPECTIVE OF THE POWER OF YOUR GOD WILL MINIMIZE THE POWER OF YOUR PROBLEM.

When Abram was in his tent, all he could see was his problem. All he could see was the nursery room that they built with no baby boy in it. All he could see was the high chair he made at the end of

the table with no son in it.

But God, because He is faithful and gracious, takes Abram outside and says *“Let me enlarge your perspective. You’re thinking about ONE... I’m thinking about THIS (points up to the stars).”*

Genesis 22:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ ... I will multiply your descendants **beyond number**, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.

Abram wants a SON.

God wants a WHOLE FAMILY.

Abram wants an HEIR.

God wants a NATION.

And then through that NATION and seed... He will get back and redeem those others that have fallen away from Him.

Galatians 3:26-29 (NLT) - God’s Children through Faith

²⁶ For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ **And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.**

In Christ... YOU are Abraham’s seed!

And the promises of this covenant and the opportunity to be in God’s Family belong to anyone who is in Christ through faith.

At the beginning Abram was thinking of a SON, but the whole time God was thinking FAMILY!

2. THE COVENANT IS VALUABLE & PRECIOUS.

Genesis 15:9-11 (NLT)

⁹ The Lord told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the

middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half.¹¹ **Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.**

(Background of bloodshed in OT COVENANTS)

- “Let what has happened to these animals happen to me if I break this covenant.”
- **NOTICE:** Abram did not walk through the sacrifices – which was customary when 2 parties make a covenant with one another. **ONLY THE LORD** went through the sacrifices.
- *Why? Because the Lord knew “Abram, you can’t keep this covenant. And you actually have nothing to offer me. You really can’t promise me anything.”*
- *So the Lord Himself passes through the sacrifice and swears by Himself – because there is NO NAME HIGHER.*

We are NOT changed by making promises to God.

We are changed by believing God’s promises to us.

- Abram BELIEVED God and it was credited to him as righteous
- Belief = NOT just intellectual agreement; it’s OBEDIENCE – there is a DEMONSTRATION involved
- How do we know Abram believed = because he packed up his livelihood and moved to a place that he did not know

But here’s what I want you to see – **VERSE 11:**

Even on day 1 - in the midst of God making this covenant with Abram - **there came things that would wish to devour it** - you see Abram had to fight to hold on to this covenant from day one!

There will be things in life (the enemy for 1) that will try to devour and eliminate the covenant God has made you.

- Now the enemy can’t physically destroy the covenant of God – I mean, NO CHANCE!
- **The enemy will do his absolute best to try to make that covenant disappear from you MIND and HEART and REMEMBRANCE.**
- Perhaps this is why NT scriptures would tell us FAITH IF A FIGHT (1 Timothy 6:12) !

3. THE COVENANT HAS A CLAUSE FOR COMEBACKS.

Genesis 15:13-16 (NLT)

¹³Then the Lord said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. ¹⁵(As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) ¹⁶After four generations **your descendants will return here to this land,** for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

The covenant basically told Abram 2 things: Don't worry about yourself, don't worry about your kids - I GOT IT ALL COVERED.

God was honest about his descendants though – they are going to fall into some trouble & be slaves in a foreign land for a long time.

But even on DAY ONE of this COVENANT... God was already planning the comeback of Abram's descendants.

EX: The Prodigal Son – the fattened calf

- Calves don't get fattened by themselves
- Every day that son was out wandering in rebellion, there was a father at home in the barn feeding a calf.
- Every day that son was saying and thinking to himself “I'll NEVER go back home to that place”, there was a father in a barn, feeding a calf, preparing for his return.
- You know what the fattened calf shows us about the Father...

MAYBE YOU WEREN'T THINKING OF ME, BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THINKING OF YOU.

The COMEBACK.

The covenant didn't just include a comeback for those who were slaves in Egypt... it includes a comeback - for all those who were enslaved to sin and death and unrighteousness - to have the opportunity to COMEBACK to the covenant family of God through faith in Jesus Christ!

GOD WANTS A COVENANT FAMILY! (EARTHLY & SPIRITUAL!)

But listen to me... if you're not in Christ through FAITH...
YOU'RE OUTSIDE OF THE COVENANT FAMILY... and you're in
trouble. You're vulnerable. You're in danger.

And there is a celebration waiting for you should you decide
through BELIEF (which includes demonstration) to come back.

[CONCLUSION]

COVENANT: A word we don't use often in society anymore –
and it's a shame – because it's a very significant, powerful word
– a God given term actually.

EX: Auto-correct changed the word covenant to **CONVENIENT**.

Listen Church... **SOMETIMES KEEPING YOUR COVENANT IS NOT
CONVENIENT!**

WATCH THIS: The reason you are here today is because God
made **AND KEPT** a covenant.

**And God keeping his covenant with mankind hasn't always been
convenient!**

**BUT WHY DID GOD DO IT ALL... BECAUSE HE HAD A
COVENANT TO KEEP! AND HE WANTED A FAMILY.**

That covenant God made with Abraham was a long time ago – like
thousands of years ago.

You know what today is... **SOME TIME LATER.**

You know what I love about God's Covenant... it's just as good,
faithful, and true SOME TIME LATER as it was on day one.

[ALTAR CALL]