

High  
Plains  
Drifters

## Genesis 17:8 – 18:8



~ We designated chapter seventeen the outstanding chapter of the Bible in our last report from our Spiritual Safari. Some have labeled it the key to understanding the entire Bible. Thirteen times we will see the word “covenant” in this chapter. God promised Abraham a seed and a land; two very specific things. God also explicitly promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. God told Abraham what He was going to do; and Abraham simply responded by saying, “I believe you” – even when believing was almost impossible. I mean, it’s laughable to the world to call yourself “father of many nations” when you don’t have any children, my beloved. God said, “I will” – and He did! This covenant is also “everlasting;” and we saw that word before, too. Because it’s a forever promise - it won’t be broken – not ever. Everlasting may be longer than forever, by the way; and I’m sure twenty minutes seems everlasting when you read these safari reports; but I digress....

### XVII

***8 And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.***

~ Up to this present day, Israel has been in the land three times; but Israel only ever occupied the Promised Land according to this covenant under God’s very definite and specific conditions. Of course, Jacob was in the land first - but they ended up in Egypt during Joseph’s day. Then, the second time is when God brought them back from slavery in Egypt. Next, they went into the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities because of idolatry, because of not witnessing properly to the world for God and for refusing to keep the Sabbatic Year; but God brought the remnant back for the third occupation

of the land from Babylon anyways. How gracious He is! Even so, they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah and went back out of the land in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus the Roman. In the eyes of God – they've never been back.

Today, Israel is physically and temporarily back in the land - but not according to Scriptural prophecy. We have been over that in previous reports; so, if you doubt the accuracy of these statements, then I suggest you go back and read all eighteen of our safari reports from the Book of Genesis. God said they would be put out three times and they have been put out twice. When they return in fulfillment of prophecy IN THAT DAY they will never go out again – and that will be in the millennium. I regard anyone who takes the position that Israel is returned today in fulfillment of prophecy as trafficking in sensationalism. Friends, the Bible is sensational enough with out us tampering with it – as in – adding to it; and that's what you are doing when you assert that Israel is back in the land today according to Scriptural prophecy....

***9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.***

***10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.***

~ Circumcision is the badge of this covenant. They didn't do this in order to enter the covenant; they performed circumcision because they HAD entered into the covenant. I can best explain it this way: there is really no worldly explanation as to why I didn't go off a complete renegade in my life. There was no man that I knew who led me on the right path during my formative years. I rejected the examples of manhood completely in my life; because my real father, my stepfather, and various other influences on my early years, ultimately wrote me off without a second thought. The Spirit of the Lord moved upon me to write about Him; and here I am. So, similarly, I didn't start writing to be saved – I started writing because I WAS saved....

***11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.***

***12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.***

~ Now, if you want to jump over to the record of Christ's birth you'll notice how meticulous the account is. The entire law is combed in connection with the virgin birth. He was the son of Abraham - and He was the Son of David; He was in the proper lineage - and on the eighth day He was circumcised under the law. So many people today decide they will be circumcised and that will make them saved - or - that they'll be baptized - or they will join a church - or speak in tongues - or give money - and they believe those things will make them acceptable to God. They don't do these things because they are born again - they do them for every other reason under the sun EXCEPT as a result of the new birth; and that's tragic - because it always breeds doubt - and usually more than one person in their life is left in doubt, by the way. If you ARE saved - you'll do all of these things, maybe - but maybe not - and, either way, let's keep the horse before the cart and not the other way around. Tragically, I also personally know a WHOLE LOT of people who have their horse IN their cart - and they're going absolutely nowhere....

***13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.***

***14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.***

~ The descendants of Jacob - the children of Israel - will be just about in TOTAL disobedience to God when they come out of Egypt; but even that condition did not militate against the covenant God has made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It meant individuals were going to have to be responsible and accountable for themselves; but no individual or group could nullify this covenant in any way. Today, man is the one in breach of contract with God - not God with man. God owes man NOTHING, my

friends! What should make you bow in reverence and shut your mouth is that this covenant contract still stands – right now – today – but YOU may not have another tomorrow. You may want to turn that over in your mind and really think it through to its final conclusion. Here, at the time in which we are studying, God had called Abraham the “father of many nations,” so it’s fitting for Sarah, whose name means “princess,” by the way, to be called the “mother of many nations....”

***15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.***

***16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.***

***17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear ?***

~ Is Abraham laughing at the promise of God here? I like to doubt it’s the laughter of unbelief; I like to think it’s the laughter of sheer JOY! There is tremendous joy in that moment when the Holy Spirit brings peace to our chaotic lives and we just break down and say, “alright, Lord, I accept it.” How wonderful it really is to get to that place of unmitigated hope. God has done that for me, friends – more than once. If He hasn’t done it for you He wants to. Have you ever had a situation or circumstances work out and you can do nothing but laugh and shake your head and say, “this is unbelievable?” Well, THAT is how Abraham felt at this time! Even so, Abraham STILL did not understand how Isaac could possibly happen, but, Abraham believed God! I simply cannot tell you how important this precept and tenet of truth really is....

*Romans 4: 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was*

*about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ~*

Abraham is riding so high in faith right here that he can do nothing but laugh; and he is charging through life literally overwhelmed at the wonder and goodness of God. He is thinking the highest and loftiest thoughts he possibly can when another thought comes to him – and like an arrow to the heart it hits from nowhere. He thinks of something that happened a long time ago now: this little boy of his - Ishmael. Abraham considers the horrible mistake he has made as he thinks very clearly about Ishmael and the implications of being impatient and of not waiting on the Lord....

***18 And Abraham cried out to God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!***

~ Well, God commanded Abraham to send Ishmael out of the home when the boy was just fourteen, and we'll see that a little later. I think that broke Abraham's heart. In fact, I know it did. I'm also certain that Abraham questioned both God and himself very, very much at this time. Abraham definitely regretted what happened with Hagar – as did Sarah – and rightly so. This thing was likely tearing their home apart. In Israel there is never-ending trouble today; and there has been trouble since the very beginning – with Ishmael. There will be trouble until the Lord returns, too. Why? – Sin, friends; plain and simple. Sin is not something you get by with and sin is not some little mistake that we can work out and correct on our own. Be not deceived; God is not mocked. We can't work out our sin problem with God at all – not even partially. Why? - Because it's non-negotiable with God: the soul that sinneth, it shall DIE! A man shall reap what he sows and, oh, how Abraham is reaping right now. Selah ~

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

***20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee : Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful , and will multiply him exceedingly ; twelve princes shall he beget , and I will make him a great nation.***

***21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.***

~ This is God's way of saying, "no!" From here forward in our safari we cannot say that just because something is recorded in the Bible that God approves of that thing. Satan lied; but God doesn't approve of lying. Tamar was raped by her brother in David's day – but God doesn't approve of rape. This is harsh medicine right here; because we're learning all about the total depravity of mankind – and that just isn't some feel good sermon on prosperity and health. God was not deterred in what He said He would do - and His plan didn't change one bit – but God has now finally set a time frame that Abraham can get his mind around, which is remarkable; and God now begins to speak to Abraham of things that aren't yet as if they already were....

***22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.***

~ Well, for Abraham, this thing has been decided; and the Lord has nothing else to say about it at this time. Sometimes, there are things we will do well to stop asking God for. There are times when we have said enough or asked enough. There are times when there is no need to say any more. Most people literally pester God in prayer and petition when they have already been given their final answer. They just don't see it - or they don't WANT to see it – because they don't like the answer! God left off talking because He said to Abraham, "that's enough." God never accepted Ishmael and He never intended to. Many people are praying prayers and requesting things that God has no intention of saying yes to. Likewise, we must be very – very – VERY careful about asking other people to pray about certain things for us. Frankly, most people are asking the Lord for things that are absolutely out of His will - just as Abraham is doing here by praying for Ishmael....

***23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.***

***24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.***

***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.***

~ Why was Ishmael included in the circumcision? - Because God promised that Ishmael would be a great nation, also - remember? So, Ishmael is rightly included in that. Ishmael, however, is not the promised son of Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a nation that would be called God's chosen people – but Ishmael isn't it. Isaac is the nation through whom the Messiah shall come. This is also absolutely critical to see, understand, agree with and accept. In fact, without this acceptance – your Spiritual Safari will have to end here. Of course, many people stopped reading a LONG time ago; so, let's move on without them....

## **XVIII**

~ Before the New Testament came into existence in the canons of Scripture, I suppose many people wondered why the eighteenth and nineteenth chapter of Genesis was even in the Bible. In our so-called safari, we are going to fly out and over these chapters concerning Sodom and Gomorrah – which we'll see ad nausea later – but we don't really want to be here. Unfortunately, it's very important for us to make a map of the land that we can see from our position of all spiritual blessings in the Heavens – you know, from above. In chapter eighteen we see what could be called a "blessed life" - and we see in chapter nineteen the "blasted life" – and it's all because of one crucial decision made wrongly in one's life....

***1 And the LORD appeared unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;***

**2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,**

**3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:**

**4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:**

**5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, so do, as thou hast said.**

**6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.**

**7 And Abraham ran unto the herd and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.**

**8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat ~**





