

**Genesis 17:1-7**

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty, walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” Abram fell facedown and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram, your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful, I will make nations of you and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.*

- God approaches Abram and introduces Himself and declares who He is
- God says that He is God Almighty, the One that blesses and will greatly increase him
- God tells Abram to walk before Him blameless
- Abram responded to God and falls on his face before God in surrender and then God changed his name and made a covenant with him
- God released promises over his life
- God wants to declare to you that He is God and that He is the One who blesses you and wants to make you fruitful
- God is giving us a command: “Walk before me and be blameless!”
- We need to put God first and live full-out for Him, being passionate about Him
- God is reminding us that He has changed our names when we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour
- We have become part of the Kingdom of God. He has made a new Covenant with us

**Hebrews 8:6-13**

*But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.*

- Jesus is our mediator for a new, better covenant
- God wants to establish His plan and purpose in our lives

**Jeremiah 29:11**

*For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

- God has taken time with your life
- You are important to Him and He wants you to become the very best
- But God wants us to walk before Him blameless

**Genesis 15:1–4**

*After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children, so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.”*

- God says to Abram that He will make him great. But Abram says to God that he does not have a son, how can he become great if he does not have an heir

### **Genesis 16:1–6**

*Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar, so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave, perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me." "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar, so she fled from her.*

- Sarai began to doubt and in her condition/situation she starts making her own plans
- Abraham listened to the voice of his wife instead of trusting God
- When Hagar fell pregnant she started to despise Sarai
- Now Sarai started to blame Abraham
- It is in our moment of dispare that we doubt God and we lose sight of God's promises and plans and we put our own plans in motion. This is where our problems start
- In that moment when we make our own plans we close our hearts to the Lord and are no longer available to Him
- The wrong things start to manifest in our lives and we draw away from God
- We blame others for our mistakes and problems. We begin to make excuses why we cannot do something for God. When you withdraw you become critical
- It is the enemy's plan to distract you from the dream God has for you
- He wants to take us away from our purpose and destiny
- Sarai started to mistreat Hagar and she decided to run away but God had a plan for her life

### **Genesis 16: 13**

*She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."*

- She had an encounter with the Lord and realised how important she is to God
- She realized how much God loves her and the great plan that He has for her
- The One that you pray to and worship, sees you. God sees you and is concerned about you. He loves you and cares for you. He wants to have an encounter with you
- **God wants us to get back to our first love for Him**
- Nothing is too difficult for you when you love God
- When you love God with everything you will touch people even when you do not have all the skill
- What you sow in life you will reap at a later stage
- When you take the right actions and walk before God blameless, you will see the fruit
- God has given this warning, "you have loved Me but what about now?"

### **Galatians 6:7**

*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

- How is your relationship with God now?
- Are you still passionate about God and the Kingdom?
- Is your love for God still your driving force?
- The enemy will go full-out to destroy your life because he is jealous of our position before God
- It is important for us not to look at the state that we are in but that we will keep our eyes on the promises that He has given to us and the plan that He has for us

### **Genesis 18:19**

*For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."*

- God chose Abraham to lead his family to serve God so that the promises could come into fulfillment
- God has chosen us

### **1 Peter 2:9**

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

- God called us not only to walk a blameless and holy life but to touch people for Him and for His Kingdom
- It is not only for you but it is for your children and your friends
- The story of Lot's wife – God told Lot and his family not to look back
- Many people in the church in the spiritual realm have turned into salt pillars because we are holding on to things in our past
- We are not moving forward
- We need to forget about the past. We need to break free so that God can use us
- Surrender your life and become available for God to use you
- Make the decision to be passionate about God
- This will release His plans for us
- The problem is that we have become used to hearing that God has a plan for us

### **Senior Pastor HL Bester**

- We need to get our first love for God back
- God is a miracle God
- There was darkness at the cross but the light broke through
- Jesus did not remain in the tomb - He rose from the dead
- He took the keys of death
- The same Spirit that raised Jesus from death are now living in you
- We need to be excited about what He has done for us
- Jesus overcame sin and death for us – He is victorious
- We can also become victorious
- We need to appreciate Jesus like never before
- When you call out the name "Jesus" something begins to happen
- Ask God for a miracle this week to take the Kingdom forward and He will do it for you
- The enemy has already lost – we do not need to fight, we are trusting God by faith
- 2018 will be the year of great miracles