

## Who Is Too Old?

### I. Slide1 Intro: Who Is Too Old?

A. It's an *age-old problem*...Who is **elderly**? According to news outlets like *NPR, the New York Times and Philadelphia Metro*, someone **between the ages of 69 and 71** is considered elderly. Technically, a person is considered elderly if he is past *middle age*. However, some people feel that the term elderly is used to describe someone who is *feeble and unable to care for himself*.

B. J. Sidlow Baxter said, *as a general rule the elderly have the best-quality abilities*.<sup>1</sup>

1. Slide2a He said, there are **statistics** which show that **the richest productivity** lies in the decade between the **60th-70th** birthdays.

2. They listed **400 names** of the most noted men in all times were selected - *statesman, soldiers, painters, poets, authors*. Next to their name was placed what was considered to be his greatest achievement. *Here's what the stats show...*

a) Slide2b **35%** were between the ages of 60 and 70. **23%** between 70 and 80. **6%** over 80. **In other words, 64%** of the greatest masterpieces or achievements belong to those over 60 years old.

3. Think of the elderly's *testimony, prayers, sympathy, counsel, stories*. *We need to come up with new challenges to the elderly among us*.

a) **Abraham at 99 gets: A new call to sanctification. A new revelation of God as El-Shaddai. A new name speaking to his future fruitfulness. Further details from God regarding the divine covenant with him. And the crowning the promise of Isaac.**

4. Slide2c As a general rule **the elderly have the best-quality abilities**.

C. **13 year gap between ch.16 & 17.**

1. Once more, God appears to Abram to *reiterate His covenant promises*.

2. To confirm the covenant, God gives Abram a **new name** and institutes the practice of **circumcision** as a sign of the covenant.

<sup>1</sup> J. Sidlow Baxter, *Awake my heart*, pg.281.

D. **Outline: God to Abram. God to Abraham. God to Sarah. God to Ishmael.**

## II. Slide3a **GOD TO ABRAM (1-8)**

A. (1) Abraham's age is mentioned at key events in his life.

B. **I am God Almighty** - this is the famous, *El Shaddai*. (based on the Gk not Heb)

1. **Shadday** is similar to the Hebrew term **shad**, meaning **breast**, but **God of breasts** is not a reasonable translation.

2. The possibly related Akkadian word **shadu** (meaning **mountain, probably Sinai**) e.g., **God of the mountain**. (Rock)

C. (6-8) God's promises here reinforce what God had earlier promised to Abram in ch.12,15.

1. **Years** of Abraham's life separate these repetitions of the promise, but each repetition has the **same basic elements: many descendants and land**.

D. (6) **Fathering Kings** are a new addition, later fulfilled through **David's dynasty**.

E. *Let's take a little right turn...*

F. **Slide3b THE ABIDING LIFE** (*read* Ps.91:1-4)

G. **Theme is Security**: God preserves those who **abide** in Him & **love** Him.

H. **Who are these promises for?** *Everyone? All believers?*

1. **Or** are these promises for those who **visit** the secret place called church, once every Sunday, whether they need it or not?

2. **Or** are these promises for those who **run** to the Lord only **in times of danger?** (He may respond to us when we do that; **but is that to whom THIS PROMISE is to?**)

3. **Slide4 Or** are these promises for those who **dwell** in His presence?

a) Yep, for the **dwellers**, not just *visitors*.

b) Not just *visiting* the Holy Place, **as** the high priest did once a year.

c) The Psalmist is urging, **Live in the Holy of Holies**.

d) An open invitation to **come into** the presence of God & **dwell** in the secret place.

4. That's where He **meets us, gives us guidance, & shows us His will**.

- I. Slide5 (1,2) 4 metaphors for security & 4 divine names.
1. 4 metaphors - Shelter (Secret place). Shadow. Refuge. Fortress (promises of God)
  2. 4 divine names - Most High; Almighty; the Lord; My God. (person of God)
    - a) Most High – [Elyon] a title which cuts every threat down to size.
    - b) Almighty – [Shaddai] the name which sustained the homeless patriarchs.
    - c) The Lord – [Yahweh/Jehovah] Moses was assured with both *I am* & *I am with you*.
    - d) My God - [Elohim] Gen term, God is made intimate by the possessive, as *My God*.
- J. Abide in the shadow of the Almighty – A shadow isn't normally good protection...*unless* your talking about being behind your **big brother** as he protects you.
1. My shadow isn't much protection for anyone. **But** when it belongs to the Almighty, a shadow is a strong protection.
    - a) **Example:** A rabbit's shadow? How about a bear cub in his *mama's shadow*?
  2. **Do you live under God's shadow?** (abide, live, dwell, camp there, rest there)

### III. Slide6a GOD TO ABRAHAM (9-14)

- A. (9,10) Abram (exalted father) - Av = father. ram = to be raised or exalted.
- B. Abraham - father of a multitude/of many nations.
- C. Slide6b Circumcision - (Egyptians were doing 23rd cent bc)
  1. It was a badge of obedience to God. It represented their faith.
  2. It is used metaphorically with *heart, lips, & ears*.
    - a) In Deut.10:16 instructs the Israelites to *circumcise the foreskins of their hearts and cease being stubborn*.
    - b) Matter of fact he warns He further warns them in Jer.9:25 that He will *punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh*.
  3. God from the beginning, wanted *an inward change of the heart*, not just surgery of the body.

### IV. Slide7a GOD TO SARAH (15-19)

- A. (16) Sarai (contentious?). Sarah - a princess. (sar = prince) [only women in bible God names]

B. (16) **By her** - now Abraham learns that it extends to Sarah as well. (think *faux pas* w/Hagar)

C. (18) **Concerned for his firstborn son Ishmael** who becomes *excluded* from the covenant by this conversation.

1. Abraham wanted to *cling to his past mistake*, instead of looking to future miracle that God would perform.

D. (19) **Finally God...all the details!** (24 yrs later, since ch.12)

1. **Slide7b** Here are all the **details** of His plan to fulfill the promise of offspring. **He will have a son**, *the child of promise*, **by Sarah** whose name will be **Isaac...not Ishmael**.

E. **Isaac**, *the child of promise*. Yet he plays *a relatively minor role* in *the Genesis narratives*.

1. Soon after **Abraham** dies (ch.25), **Jacob** - the next major figure in Genesis is introduced (25). **Isaac** appears as a young man in the story of his binding in (22), where he is a *mostly passive character*. **He** is largely absent from the narrative of when *Abraham's servant* finds Rebekah from among their relatives as Isaac's wife (24).

## V. **Slide8a GOD TO ISHMAEL (20-27)**

A. (20) **So many new names**. **Abram/ Abraham. Sarai/Sarah. God** even revealed a new name for Himself *God Almighty*. **But Ishmael's** name didn't change. *That which is born in the flesh remains flesh & cannot be changed*.

B. **Slide8b** **Ishmael, I have heard you** (God hears) - you will not be forgotten.

C. **I will bless him** - The language concerning Ishmael's blessing shares much of the wording of the cov with Abraham and Isaac.

1. *Missing elements* include the promise of **the land of Canaan** and **the blessing of the other nations**.

D. **Slide8c** (23) **that very day** - **INSTANT** obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; **delayed obedience is *disobedience***.

1. **Moses** comes on the scene in Ex.2. Meets God in burning bush Ex.3. Then in ch.4 heading to Egypt to set God's people free as instructed. Then it says immediately after that 4:24-26, ***At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. 25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her***

*son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" 26 So he (God) let him alone.*

2. *Slide8d* Christina Rossetti, *Obedience is the fruit of faith; patience, the bloom on the fruit.*

E. Any areas of **obedience** the Lord is challenging you to?