

# **Patriarchal Age - After the flood.**

**Genesis  
16 and 17;  
Birth of Ishmael.  
Circumcision Covenant.  
Graeme Morrison**

**Genesis 15 spoke of a number of promises given by God to Abram.**

They were wide ranging and sealed with **a dramatic covenant ceremony** in which animal sacrifices are set forth.

The presence of **the Lord** moves between the carcasses of the animals **to bind Himself to his oath.**

Abram is given the assurance from heaven that:-

**God will protect him** from Chedorlaomer and the king of Sodom.

**God will** make him **rich.**

**God will multiply** his **descendants** greatly.

**God will** give him **the land** of Canaan.

**Abram believed these promises  
and rested upon them.**

**As the weeks went by, he waited  
for God's promises to be answered.**

**The weeks turned into months  
and the months turned to years  
and still Abram waited.**

**It is at this point that  
he is presented with a plan  
to help bring about the promised son.**

# THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL 16:1-16:

## ***Genesis 15***

**Begins with God coming to Abram with a message.**

**Abram believed the Lord.**

**God gave to Abram promises of protection, of a seed, and of the possession of the land.**

**God spoke to Abram and gave him instruction and promises.**

**Abram is promised a son who will be his heir.**

## ***Genesis 16***

**Begins with Sarai coming to Abram with advice.**

**Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.**

**Sarai gave to Abram her handmaiden Hagar to fulfil the promise of the seed.**

**God spoke to Hagar and gave her instructions and promises.**

**Hagar is promised a son who will be a wild man.**

## THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL 16:1-16;

While **Genesis 15** is a chapter of **Abram's belief and victory**, **Genesis 16** will be a chapter suggesting **unbelief and failure**.

The failure will involve both **a lack of faith** on the part of Abram as well as **a lack of leadership** within his own family.

This **tells us** something about the **characters** of the Bible. **They are not stained glass saints.**

## **THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL 16:1-16;**

**They are real people  
with real failings and real struggles.**

**Abram was not chosen by God  
because he was so strong and faithful;**

**Abram was chosen by God's grace  
in spite of the fact that he was undeserving.**

**The grace of God in using Abram  
means that God  
can use you and He can use me.**

# THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL 16:1-16;

**This chapter  
is centrally located  
in the Abraham narrative.**

**It serves as something  
of a pivotal point  
for the entire story of Abraham.**

## Promises given

- Abram called to leave his family
- Promise of Seed (12:1-3;)

## Travels in the land

- Abram journeys (12:4-9;)
- Sojourn in Egypt, “She is my sister” (12.10-20;)

## Lot and Abram

- Lot and Abram negotiate over land (13;)
- Abram rescues Lot and people of Sodom (14;)

God’s covenant ceremony with Abram & promise of the Land(15;)

Hagar and Ishmael (16;)

God’s covenant naming of Abraham and promise of Seed (17;)

## Lot and Abraham

- Abraham negotiates with God over Lot and Sodom (18;)
- Angels rescue Lot as Sodom is destroyed (19;)

## Travels in the land

- Abraham journeys southward (20:1;)
- Sojourn in Gerar, “She is my sister” (20.1-18;)

## Promises fulfilled

- Isaac born; Hagar and Ishmael sent out from covenant family(21;)
- Abraham's Test: Blessing of Seed (22:1-19;)

# THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL 16:1-16:

This chapter will be seen  
in two parts and two encounters.

The first is an encounter  
between Hagar and Sarai,  
The second will be an encounter  
between Hagar and God.

16:1-3	16:4-5	16:6	16:7	16:8-9	16:10-16
Hagar Encounters Sarai			Hagar Encounters God		
Sarai's Plan	Domestic Strife	Abram's Solution	Hagar's flight	God's instructions to Hagar	God's Promises to Hagar

## THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL 16:1-16:

Up to this point, **the story line of Genesis** has been largely **masculine** in focus.

Only at the temptation in the Garden of Eden have we been treated to the perspective of a woman.  
**That changes in this chapter.**

The perspective **shifts** from **Abram** to **his wife, Sarai**, and to her handmaiden, Hagar.  
When Abram is mentioned at all in this chapter, it is in **a relatively minor role.**

**Abram Listened to the Voice of Sarai.**

**Abram listened to Sarai.**

**Sarai gives Hagar to Abram as his wife.**

**Hagar conceives.**

**Hagar despises her mistress Sarai.**

**Sarai blames Abram.**

**Abram lets Sarai resolve the tension.**

**Sarai mistreats Hagar until she leaves.**

## **THE PLAN OF SARAI. Gen 16:1-3;**

**1 “Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.**

**2 “So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.”  
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.”**

**3 And after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife.**

**Gen 16 01;** “Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.”

**This chapter begins with a problem.**

It is the ongoing problem that underlies everything in the Abram narrative up to this point.

It was first introduced **at the end of Genesis 11** when we were first told of **Abram and his wife.**

The wives of Abram and Nahor were named and then we were immediately told:-

**“And Sarai was barren; she had no child.”**

**(Genesis 11:30;)**

**Gen 16 01;** “Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.”

Just in case we had forgotten this was the case, **it is repeated here** at the beginning of this chapter.

**Ten more years** have **passed** since God had made **the seed promise** of Gen 12:1ff;

Abraham was now 85 years old and Sarah was 75.  
(Gen 17:17; compared to Gen 12:4;)

**Sarai still has not borne children to Abram.**

It is at this point that **she comes up with a plan** to provide a son. She is barren, but there are local customs that will allow her to provide a son through her Egyptian handmaiden.

# Sarai's Proposal.

**Consistent with God's  
revealed will.**  
(“from your own body”)

**Failed to seek  
God's approval.**

**Might achieve  
God's goal:-  
descendant for Abram**

**Regression to pagan  
practices of old  
No guarantee of success  
 (“perhaps”)**

**Acknowledges God,  
but does not trust in Him**

**Failed to contemplate  
The consequences  
of success**

**Gen 16 01;** “Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.”

The handmaiden chosen for this duty is named **Hagar**. We are told that **she was an Egyptian**.

It may be that she was acquired by Abram when he travelled to Egypt in Genesis 12:10;

**Abram had gone down to Egypt and now he has a little bit of Egypt living in his household.**

**Why is this detail mentioned in the text of Genesis?**

It is mentioned because **the Israelites for whom this book is written have recently come out of Egypt.**

It is mentioned to **remind them how past associations can lead to continuing problems.**

**Gen 16 02;** “So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.”

**Sarai’s Desire for a Child:**

**Notice the phrasing employed by Sarai:-**

**“The LORD has prevented me from bearing children.” Is she blaming God for her inability to bear children?**

**Sarai makes no mention of the promises of God. She may not have been sure that those promises had any application to her.**

**God had promised that Abram would have offspring, but no mention had been made that this promised offspring would come through Sarai.**

**Gen 16 02;** “So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.”

**We are not told what was Sarai’s motivation in this offer. She makes no mention of the promise of God.**

**Though it is entirely possible that she is acting according to the customs and legal codes of her day to bring about that promised offspring.**

**On the other hand, it is equally possible that she merely wished to give to Abram that for which the both of them had longed.**

**Gen 16 02;** “So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.”

**Sarai’s Precedent:-** “Gilimninu has been given to Shennima as wife. If Gilimninu bears children, Shennima shall not take another wife, But if Gilimninu does not bear, she shall take a slave-girl from the Lullu - region as wife for Shennima. As for the concubine’s offspring, Gilimninu shall not send them away.”

**A Personal Archive from the Nuzi Tablets.**

From **the Nuzi tablets**, we know that **Sarai’s proposal** was considered to be **both legally and socially acceptable.**

It was to the ancient world what **fertility drugs** and **in vitro fertilization** are to the modern world.

**Gen 16 02;** “So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold,  
the LORD has prevented me from bearing children.

Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.”

In the event if **a woman could not bear children**,  
she had the option of giving to her husband **a  
servant who would become a secondary wife to him.**

**Abram’s response to Sarai.**

He agrees to her plan although this does not  
necessarily denote a lack of leadership on his part.

**He may also have considered this to be the means  
by which God was going to give to him a child**

# Hagar and Ishmael.

Hagar treated Sarai with contempt. (16:5-6;)

Sarai exerted her power over Hagar.

Hagar ran away.

**Gen 16 4-5;** “And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight. And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me.”

## **DOMESTIC STRIFE:-**

**Hagar becomes pregnant with child from Abram and it is not long before Hagar begins to look down on Sarai, her former mistress.**

**The situation recalls the words of the Proverbs:-**

**21 “Under three things the earth quakes, And under four, it cannot bear up: 22 Under a slave when he becomes king, And a fool when he is satisfied with food, 23 Under an unloved woman when she gets a husband, And a maidservant when she supplants her mistress.**

**(Proverbs 30:21-23;)**

**Gen 16 4-5;** “And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight. And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me.”

The **slight against Sarai** was **not imagined**,  
for the **text** tells us that  
**her mistress was despised in her sight.**

**Sarai caught the vibes very quickly.**

I have learned that when one woman  
wants another woman to know what she is thinking,  
**she does not have to say a word.**

**Sarai got the message very soon.**

Sarai goes to her husband with the problem  
and dumps it in his lap. **She calls for the Lord  
as a witness and a judge between them.**

**Gen 16 06;** “But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.”

**Abram’s solution looks harsh to our western sensitivities, but in reality, he handles the situation in what was considered to be a fair and appropriate manner.**

**Sarai was Abram’s chief wife by reason of her original marital status and this gave her authority in the family.**

**Gen 16 06;** “But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.”

On the other hand, **Sarai’s harsh treatment of Hagar** is more **reminiscent of the Pharaoh’s harsh treatment of the Israelites** when they were in bondage in Egypt.

Just as **Israel longed for deliverance** from her cruel taskmasters, so **Hagar** longed for such deliverance and engaged in her own private **“Exodus Event”** as she fled out into the wilderness.

The **irony of this similarity** to the Exodus of the Israelites would not have been lost to the original readers of this text.

They would have found themselves **identifying**, not with Sarai, but **with Hagar**. This is especially seen when we read of the route taken by Hagar.

**Gen 16 06;** “But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.”

What began as a **human conceived** idea to help God’s plan to come to pass **turned out to be a disaster** for Abraham and Sarah. **Hagar began to “despise.”**

**Sarah demands that Abraham deal with the situation.**

Abraham turns the issue back to Sarah and thereby gives her authority to do as she thinks best for the situation.

**Sarah thereby “dealt harshly” with Hagar. Hagar flees.**

**Instead of helping God** with His purpose for Abraham and Sarah **the two made a mess.** **Instead of having a seed that God would bless** they had **a child born in adultery and now gone.**

## **Hagar and Ishmael.**

**An angel appeared to Hagar  
as she rested by a fountain. (16:7-9;)**

**Hagar told him she was running away  
from her mistress, Sarai.**

**The angel told Hagar  
to return and submit to Sarai.**

**Gen 16 7-9;** “Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.”

When we next see Hagar, **she is in the wilderness by the spring on the way to Shur.**

This would have been **a familiar place** to the Israelites for whom Moses wrote the book of Genesis, **for Shur was the first place to which they came after their crossing of the Red Sea.**

**They came out of Egypt and entered the Wilderness of Shur. (Exodus 15:22;)** and now we read of Hagar leaving the presence of Sarai and going on the way to Shur.

**Gen 16 7;** “Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.”

**She is met by the angel of the Lord.**  
**This is the first time** in the Bible  
we have seen this designation.

It is **the first use** of the Hebrew **MALACH** - angel,  
though such a designation  
would not have been unfamiliar to the Israelites.

**This is a messenger from Yahweh.**  
Waltke points out that “in the ancient Near East  
the royal messenger was treated as a surrogate  
of the king” (2001:253-4.)

**By the same token, the angel of the Lord  
is treated as though he is God Himself.**

**Gen 16 7-8;** “Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?"

**The angel came to her and questions her:**  
"Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from  
and where are you going?"

The fact that he knows her **name**  
and her **designation** indicates that he also knows  
the answer to the question he has asked.

**It is a rhetorical question.**

**It is not asked for the angel's benefit,  
but for the benefit of Hagar.**

**She is instructed to look at her actions  
and her plans and to see  
the foolishness of what she is doing.**

**Gen 16: 9;** “And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”  
Then the angel of the LORD said to her,  
“Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.”

He instructs her **to return** and **to place herself back under the authority of Sarai.**

**This will be an act of faith  
and of submission to authority.**

Such a concept is difficult for us to comprehend  
in today’s western culture where **we tend  
to idealise the ideas of rebellion and freedom.**

**Christianity is a religion of freedom and submission.**

It took the **apostle Paul** many long years  
of imprisonment to learn this same lesson.

**Gen 16: 9;** “And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”  
Then the angel of the LORD said to her,  
“Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.”

It was in one of his Prison Epistles that he was able to write these words:- “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.” (Philippians 4:11b;)

**We need to learn the same lesson.**

When we do, we will be able to trust in the Lord, even when we find ourselves under the authority of a harsh master or mistress.

**Hagar is told to return and to place herself under the authority of Sarai.** A person operating under a naturalistic viewpoint would disagree with this command.

The reason **we struggle** with this is because our tendency is **to leave God out of the picture.**

**Gen 16: 9;** “And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”  
Then the angel of the LORD said to her,  
“Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.”

**The importance of Abraham and Hagar’s seed  
is seen in these verses.**

The Lord could have let Hagar go away and **never  
would history** have heard of her and her child again.

**God had mercy upon Hagar;** however,  
and tells her to **return to Abraham and Sarah**  
and voluntarily put herself **in subjection** to the two.

**In Romans 13:1ff;** The Lord tells us  
**to be submissive** to those **in authority**  
and that He will take care of the rest.

**Gen 16: 9;** “And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”

Then the angel of the LORD said to her,

“Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.”

The highest power in the land at that time  
was the **Roman Emperor Nero.**

This man was to become an enemy of Christianity  
as **he greatly persecuted the church.**

**Yet Paul told believers to obey him.**

This can only be done  
**when you are trusting in the promises of God.**

**Hagar is given such a promise to sustain her.**

She is to **go back** and to place herself again under  
the authority of Sarai, **not because slavery is a good thing**  
**and not because Sarai will have a change of heart,.**

**but because GOD IS BIGGER than all of that**  
**and ultimately HE IS IN CONTROL.**

## **God's Promises to Hagar.**

**Return to Sarai and submit to her  
I will greatly multiply your descendants.**

**You shall bear a son named Ishmael.  
(meaning "God hears.")**

**He will be a "wild donkey of a man."**

**Hagar obeys, and Ishmael  
is born to Abram at age 86.**

## **THE PROMISED BIRTH OF ISHMAEL. 16:10=14;**

**10 “The angel added, I will give you more descendants than you can count.”**

**11. “And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard about your misery.”**

**12. “This son of yours will be a wild one, free and untamed as a wild donkey! He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live at odds with the rest of his brothers.”**

**13. “Thereafter, Hagar referred to the Lord, who had spoken to her, as “the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have seen the One who sees me!”**

**14. “Later that well was named Beer- lahairoi, and it can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.”**

**Gen 16:11;** “The angel of the LORD said to her further, “Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael.”

**The promises given to Hagar is a mixed bag.**

It contains both that which would sustain and encourage her and it also contains that which might be considered distressing.

**The Promise of a Multitude:-** “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be **too many to count.**” (16:10;)

This is **virtually the same promise** that had been **given to Abram** concerning his own descendants.

**Abram** had been told that his descendants would be like the stars, **impossible to count.**

Now **Hagar** is told that **her own descendants** will also be **too many to count.**

**Gen 16:11;** “The angel of the LORD said to her further, “Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael.”

## **The Name of her Son.**

And you shall bear a son; And you shall  
**call his name Ishmael, Because**  
the **LORD has given heed** to your affliction.

This is a play on words. **Hagar’s son** is to be named **Ishmael** because she has been **heard (shama)** **by God** in the midst of her affliction.

His name will be a reminder  
that **Yahweh is the God**  
**who hears our troubles.**

**Gen 16:12;** “And he will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.”

The **son of Hagar** is characterized as **a donkey of a man**. But the picture is not of the domesticated donkey to which we are accustomed.

This term describes **the wild donkey** that roamed the wilderness of that area. The image is of a man who is unruly and unkempt, **wild and untamed**.

**Some translations have “wild ass.”**

(an ass was **a noble animal** at this time. Job 39:5-8;)

This would give a picture of the proud, fierce and independent Arabs.

**Gen 16:13-14;** “Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “you are a God who sees”; for she said, “Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?” Therefore the well was called Beer lahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.”

**Hagar names the well at that place Beer lahairoi, “the well of seeing.”**

**The seeing had been twofold.**

God had seen her and had heard her cry and she had also seen the angel of the Lord and **lived to tell about it.**

Notice the title that is given here for God. He is called **El Ra’iy, “the God who sees.”**

It is a reminder that **God sees us** in the midst of our afflictions and in the midst of our wilderness.

**Gen 16:15-16;** “So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. And Abram was eighty six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.”

**Hagar believed the promises of God. The name she gives to Him is a recognition of His omnipresence and His omniscience.**

**Chapter 16 ends as it started, with a contrast.**

**Both Hagar and Abram were given the promise of a seed from whom would come a great multitude.**

**Both Abram and Hagar were told to reside in the land of Canaan.**

**Hagar's son would be at enmity with the world.**  
Every man's hand would be against him  
and he would be against every man.

**By contrast,** the promise given to Abram  
was that **Abram and his seed**  
**would be a blessing to the world.**

<b>Hagar's Son</b>	<b>Abram's Heir</b>
Her descendants would be innumerable.	His descendants will be innumerable.
He will be at enmity with the world.	He will be a blessing to the world.
Every man's hand will be against him.	Whoever blesses him will be blessed whoever curses him will be cursed.

## **THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL. 16:1-16:**

At this point in the story,  
it **might have looked to Abram** that there was  
**a contradiction in these prophecies.**

This is because it had not yet been revealed  
that **Abram would have another son**  
who would be the promised heir.

That will not be clarified until **Genesis 17.**  
In the interim, **Abram had to trust the Lord**  
**without knowing all the facts.**

**That is often true for us, too.**

**We have promises from God**

**it is not always clear **how** they shall be fulfilled.**

**It is not important for us to know all of the details;**

**it is only important**

**that we trust God to oversee them.**

## **Lessons from Genesis 16?**

**Our methods are not God's methods.  
We will suffer the consequences of using our  
methods rather than trusting in God.  
God's plan will prevail despite our choices.  
Be careful of the influence of others.  
Be wary of worldly solutions.**

### **How NOT to handle a mistake!**

**Sarai** - Blame someone else.

**Abram** - Ignore it.

**Hagar** - Run from it.

**Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17;**

**13 years after Ishmael's birth,**

**God appeared to Abram again. (17:1-9;)**

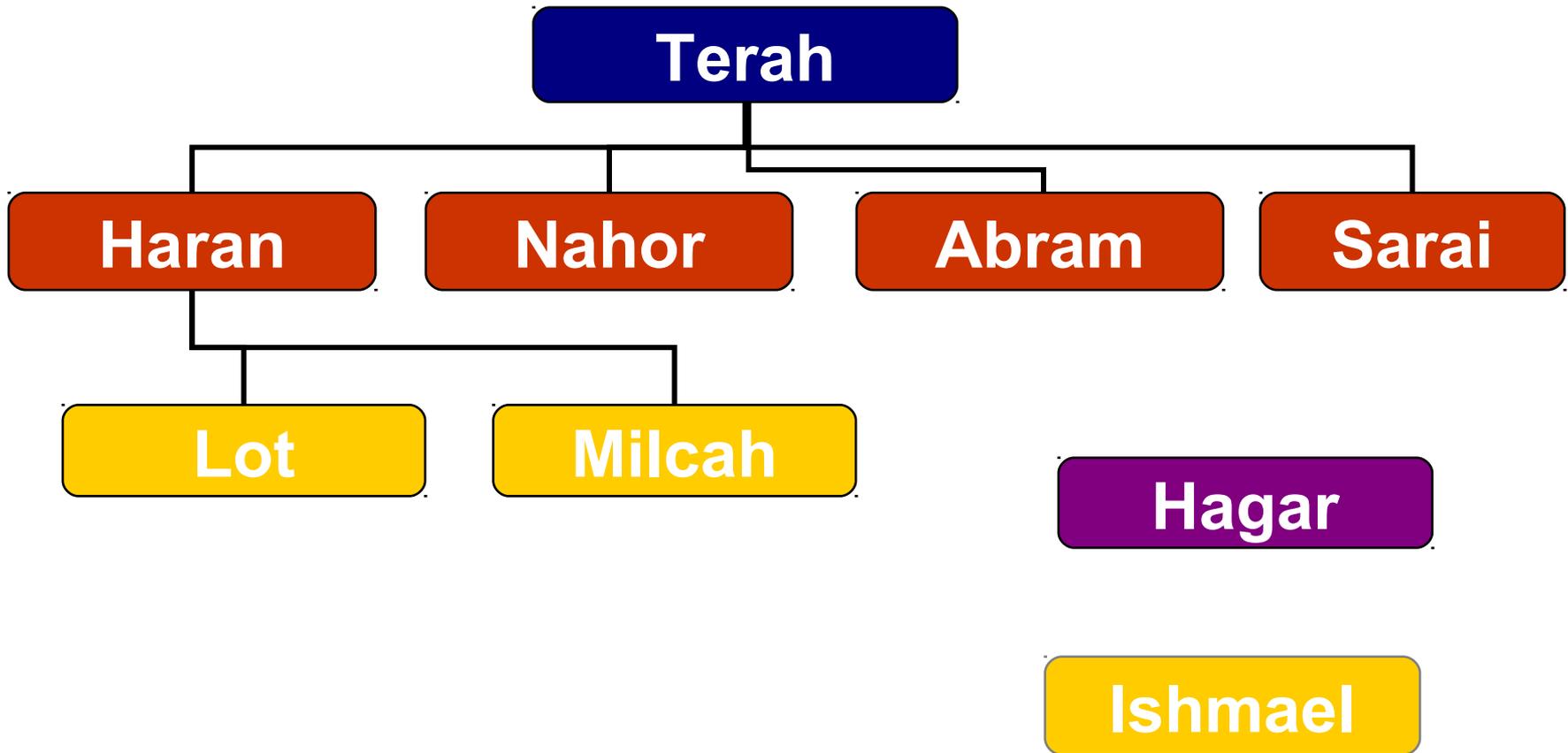
**God changes Abram's name to Abraham.**

**God repeats the threefold promise.**

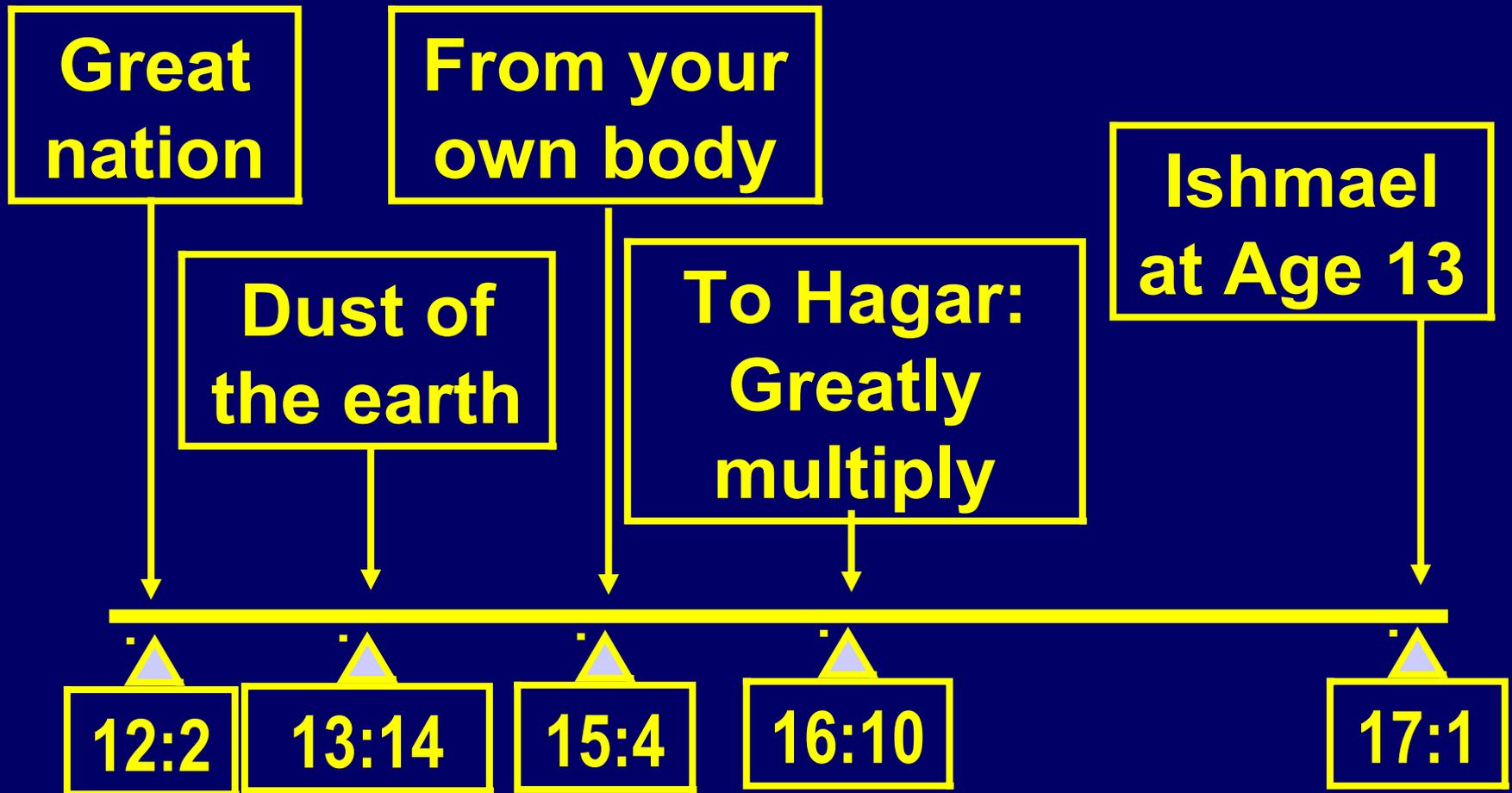
**God explains what Abraham's part  
in keeping the covenant would be.**

# Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17;

## Terah's Family Tree



# Abraham's Descendants.





# **Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:1-27;**

**Chapter 17, will describe  
the Lord coming to Abraham  
and establishing His covenant with him.**

**It will seem at first to be merely a repetition of  
The covenant that was given in chapters 12 and 15;**

**The term “covenant” was not actually used  
in chapter 12, but it was found in chapter 15;  
to summarise the covenant cutting ceremony  
presented in that chapter.**

# **Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:1-27;**

Now as we come to chapter 17,  
**the covenant idea seems almost anticlimactic.**

We have already **seen the covenant cutting ceremony** in which **the presence of God** moved through the pieces of the animals.

We have already heard **the promises of God.**

We have already been told that  
**God entered into a covenant with Abram.**

**But a closer examination** will note  
some **striking differences** between these chapters.

# Covenant of Circumcision 17:1-27:

<b>Genesis 12</b>	<b>Genesis 15</b>	<b>Genesis 17</b>
<b>From Abram would come a great nation through which all the families of the earth would be blessed.</b>	<b>Confirms a great nation will come from Abram, then emphasizes Abram's seed to be given the land of Canaan.</b>	<b>Reconfirms Abram to be the father of a great nation and given the land of Canaan. This great nation will come through Sarai.</b>
<b>Emphasis:- Great nation.</b>	<b>Emphasis:- Land of Canaan.</b>	<b>Emphasis:- Multitude to come through Sarai.</b>

# **Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:1-27;**

**With each progressive chapter and each giving of the covenant, there are additions and enlargements as God continues His program of progressive revelation.**

**This process of progressive revelation will continue, not just in the case of the Abrahamic Covenant, but throughout the entire Old Testament.**

**God is doing something through His people that is progressively revealed.**

# **Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:1-27;**

**It is a bit like going to a theatrical play.**

**You sit in the theatre and there is a stage before you, but the curtain hides the backdrop so that it is hidden from your view.**

**Then the curtain raises a foot from the ground and you are given a tantalizing view of just a small portion of what lies beyond.**

**Most of the backdrop is still hidden from your view, but now you can see just a little more.**

**The curtain raises another foot and now you can see more than what was previously revealed.**

**You still cannot see the entire scope of the backdrop, but you can see more than you did before.**

**Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:1-27;**

**Throughout the entire Old Testament,  
the curtain is gradually being raised.**

**Bit by bit and line by line, we see a little more  
of what God is doing in the world.**

**As the curtain becomes high enough,  
it becomes evident that **the primary theme  
of the backdrop is a picture of Jesus.****

**The covenant of promise is ultimately  
a promise of the coming of  
the One who will be a blessing to the world.**

**Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:1-27;**  
**This chapter is presented in a chiastic format.**

**It is a format that is familiar  
to us in the book of Genesis.**

**The central point of this chapter  
will be the ordination  
of the initiatory rite of circumcision.**

**This will be a chapter of name changes  
as the names of Abram and Sarai are changed  
to reflect their new status under the covenant.**

**It will also be a chapter of promises  
in which both Abraham and Sarah  
receive promises as to their descendants.**

**Abraham is 99 years old (17:1;)**

**The Lord appeared to Abram (17:1-2;)**

**God will make a covenant with Abram to multiply him (17:2;)**

**Abram fell on his face (17:3;)**

**Abram's name changed to Abraham (17:4-8;)**

- I will make nations of you.
- Kings shall come forth from you

**Circumcision commanded (17:9-14;)**

**Sarai's name changed to Sarah (17:15-16;)**

- She shall be a mother of nations
- Kings of peoples shall come from her.

**Abraham fell on his face and laughed (17:17;)**

**God promises multiplication through Isaac and Ishmael (17:18-21;)**

**God went up from Abraham (17:22;)**

**Abraham is 99, Ishmael is 13 years old (17:24-25;)**

# New Names.

The Lord  
God Most High →  
Lord God.

**God Almighty.  
(El Shaddai)**

Abram. →  
(Exalted Father)

**Abraham  
(Father of  
a Great Number)**

Sarai. →  
(My Princess)

**Sarah.  
(Princess)**

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

As the chapter opens, we find that **thirteen years have passed** since we **last saw Abram** at the close of **Genesis 16.**

He is now **99 years old** and he has not yet had a son by his wife **Sarai.**

He has come to **the conclusion** that **Ishmael** is the son of promise and **the one in whom all of the promises of God** will eventually be fulfilled.

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

**It is at such a time that the Lord appears to Abram.**

The scene is set  
with **three statements** from the Lord.

**A Call from the Almighty:- I am God Almighty.**

The title used here is **El Shaddai.**

By the use of this title,

**God is calling attention to His omnipotence.**

**If God is all powerful,**  
then **He is able** to keep all of His promises  
and **He is able** to supply Abram’s every need.

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

**Note that the Hebrew words for “God Almighty” are El Shaddai = “God the Mighty One... to be strong.” (Keil and Delitzsch 142).**

**What is really interesting is that when the Lord was addressing Abram in Genesis 15:7; as He communicated with him regarding the land promise, the Lord refers to Himself as “Yahweh” or “Elohim” which means “self existent or eternal.” (Strong’s 3068).**

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

## **Why did Yahweh now refer to Himself as “God Almighty?”**

Clearly, the Lord did so **to illustrate** to Abraham that **He has the power** to do what is **seemingly impossible.** (i.e., **grant that Abraham and Sarah have a child in their old age.**)

Though **Abraham viewed his “own body now as good as dead** (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”  
**(Rom 4:19;)**

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

**Note too that being a recipient of the benefits of God’s great power did not come with out conditions to be met.**

**The Lord tells Abram,**

**“walk before me, and be you perfect.”**

**some translations use the word “perfect.”**

**The idea of being perfect was being without blame.**

**There would be times when Abram was not without blame; However, he continued in faith looking forward to that day that Jesus would come into the world and forgive men of their sins.**

**(John 8:56;)**

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

Consider the fact that the **Lord “gave” Abram promises** at Gen 12:1ff and 15:7; Though the Lord promised Abram these things, **he would only received them upon walking by faith.**

So the **Lord saw that Abraham obeyed Him** and the scriptures thereby state of Abraham, “and he believed in Yahweh; and **He reckoned it to him for righteousness.**” (Gen 15:6;)

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

**The Lord has made all of mankind **promises today.****  
**(Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:16;**  
**Acts 2:36-39; 13:23ff; Rom 8: 36-39; Eph 2:1-10;)**

**To receive the gift of God (His promise of salvation through the forgiveness of man’s sins)**

**We must do as Abraham and**  
**“walk before the Lord and be blameless.”**  
**(cf. Heb 3:16-4:1, 11;)**

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

## **A Call to Walk:- Walk before Me.**

This calls to mind what the writer of Genesis has already said of **Enoch** who walked with God.  
(Genesis 5:24;)

**Abram is to live his life in the presence of God, trusting Him and obeying Him.**

**We are called to do the same thing.**  
In Colossians 1:10, Paul calls you to  
**“walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects.”**

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

**A Call to be Blameless:- And be blameless.**

The call to be **blameless**,

The KJV renders it as “**perfect**,”

is a call to **moral wholeness and integrity**.

It is the **same quality** that characterized **Noah**.

(Genesis 6:9;)

This sort of **spiritual wholeness**

**is to be characteristic of the Christian.**

**Gen 17:1-2;** “Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

**There are too many who seek to be spiritual without a corresponding emotional wellness.**

**The Bible knows nothing of such a spiritual schizophrenia.**

**Emotional health and spiritual health are inseparable**

**A Christian ought not to claim to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.**

# New Command.

I am  
**God Almighty.** →

**Walk before Me  
and be  
blameless**

Now to **Him**  
who is **able**  
to do **exceeding** →  
**Abundantly**  
beyond all that  
we ask or think.

**I, therefore,  
entreat you  
to walk in a  
manner worthy  
of the calling.**

## **A NEW NAME FOR ABRAHAM. Gen 17:3-8;**

**3 “And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.”**

**5 “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you.”**

**7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”**

## **A NEW NAME FOR ABRAHAM. Gen 17:3-8;**

It had been more than thirteen years since the Lord had last spoken to Abram, but God had not forgotten His promises.

God once again **confirms** that He is going to establish His covenant with Abram.

Yet there is **more** to this promise in this newer revelation.

In the past, God has promised that Abram's descendants will be **greatly multiplied** and that they will be **innumerable**.

Now we read that he will be the father of a multitude of nations. **It is not only a single nation** that shall come from him, but **many nations that shall be his descendants**.

**Gen 17:5;** “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.”

This new revelation  
will be commemorated by **a new name.**

His name will be **changed** from **Abram to Abraham.**

**ABRAM** “Father of heights”, “**Father of high places.**”

**ABRAHAM** - “**Father of a multitude.**”

The accent in Hebrew normally falls on final syllable.

In this case, the maqqef between **ab;** (“**father of**”) and **hamon** (“**a multitude**”) in the name changing

clause joins them together so there is only **one accent** between them (on the final syllable.)

If you speak it out loud to yourself quickly and without any undue emphasis (av-ra-HAM / av-ha-MON), you hear the play on words.

**Gen 17:5;** “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.”

The name **Abram looked back to Mesopotamia** where the people of that land worshipped the gods in high places, often building ziggurats to the sky.

**Abram's old name** may have **reflected** that **old pagan worship** out of which he had been called.

# New Promises.

**I will make you  
a Great Nation.**



**I will Multiply you  
Exceedingly.**

**Descendants  
as the dust  
of the earth**



**I will make you the  
father of a Multitude  
of Nations.**

**Descendants  
as the stars  
in the heavens.**



**I will make you  
Exceedingly  
Fruitful.**

**I will greatly  
multiply your  
descendants.**



**Kings shall come  
forth from you.**

**Gen 17:5;** “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.”

**Nations and Kings are to come from Abraham.**

**This has been literally fulfilled in nations and kings of Israel and Edom as well as from the various Arabian kingdoms.**

**In the broader sense, there have been countless kings and kingdoms that have looked to Abraham as their spiritual father.**

**Gen 17:8;** “And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

## **This is to be an Everlasting Covenant:**

As we saw in Chapter 12:1-7; and Gen 13:14; in our study of the word **everlasting OLAM** the **land promise was fulfilled.**

**God did what he said He would do but it was a conditional covenant.**  
**So the Jews cannot look to these promises to be still applicable to them today.**

**Gen 17:8;** “And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

The **good news** is that there is **One who came to fulfill the covenant requirements as well as the covenant promises.**

**Jesus is the Son of Abraham who was completely blameless in all His ways.**

**He is the One who is a blessing to all the nations so that all who believe in Him the way Abraham believed find that they have been blessed with Abraham.**

**Gen 17:8;** “And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

**7. “Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.**

**8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,”**

**“preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying,**

**“All the nations shall be blessed in you.”**

**9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.” (Galatians 3:7-9;)**

## **Covenant of Circumcision.**

**Circumcision would be the sign of God's covenant with Abraham. (17:10-14;)**

**Every male to be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.**

**All males were circumcised on the 8th day after their birth, whether born or bought as servants**

**Any male not circumcised would be cut off, to refuse circumcision was breaking the covenant.**

## **Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:9-14;**

**9. “God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.”**

**10 “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.**

**12 “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.”**

## **Covenant of Circumcision. Gen 17:9-14;**

**13 “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”**

**14 “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”**

**Gen 17:13;** “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

**The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant is appropriate to the nature of that covenant.**

This is seen when we contrast it to the sign of the Noahic Covenant.

**The sign of the Noahic Covenant was the rainbow.**

This was appropriate to a covenant that was made universally with mankind, with animals and with the earth itself.

**This universal covenant had a corresponding universal sign.**

**Gen 17:8;** “And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

**By contrast, the Abrahamic Covenant is a personal covenant.**

**It deals with certain individuals.**

**It is therefore appropriate that the sign is found in the body of those individuals which whom it deals.**

<b>The Noahic Covenant</b>	<b>The Abrahamic Covenant</b>
<b>Involves men, animals and the entire world.</b>	<b>Involves Abraham and his descendants.</b>
<b>The sign is the rainbow and relates to the entire creation.</b>	<b>The sign is circumcision and relates to Abraham’s descendants.</b>
<b>A universal sign.</b>	<b>A personal sign.</b>

**Gen 17:13;** “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

**The sign of circumcision** was only know to the individual, his parents, and his wife.

It was **not a sign** that would be shown to people in general.

**This indicates the personal nature of both the covenant and the sign of that covenant.**

**The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant** is also appropriate when we remember that **the covenant was centred around the promise of the seed.**

**It was a promise that involved the reproductive organs and the sign of the covenant was consistent with this theme.**

**Gen 17:13;** “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

The **sign of circumcision** involved the surgical “**cutting**” of the foreskin of the male organ.

This was later to become an illustration of **Israel’s complete separation** from the **sins of the flesh** in the world in which they lived, especially when **such sins** frequently involved **the misuse of sexual relationships in adultery and fornication.**

Thus, **circumcision** eventually became **a symbol** to the Jews that **they were an elect nation, holy before God.**

**Gen 17:13;** “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

**Not only were they circumcised physically, they were also to be circumcised in their hearts.**

**Circumcise then your heart,  
and stiffen your neck no more.**

**(Deuteronomy 10:16;)**

**Furthermore, the Lord promises  
that He Himself will accomplish this  
spiritual cutting in the hearts of His people.**

**Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise  
your heart and the heart of your descendants,  
to love the LORD your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul, in order that you may live.**

**(Deuteronomy 30:6;)**

**Gen 17:13;** “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

**Circumcision was a sign of faith.**

This is taught by **Paul** as he described the experience of Abraham in receiving circumcision.

“he received the sign of circumcision, a **seal of the righteousness of the faith** which he had while uncircumcised, that **he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised**, that righteousness might be reckoned to them” (Romans 4:11;)

# **Covenant of Circumcision 17:9-14;**

<b>Abrahamic Covenant</b>	<b>New Covenant</b>
<b>The sign of obedience to the covenant is circumcision.</b>	<b>The sign of obedience to the covenant is baptism.</b>
<b>Circumcision was a sign of faith.</b>	<b>Baptism is a sign of faith.</b>
<b>Physical circumcision represented the spiritual process of cutting away sin.</b>	<b>Water baptism represents the spiritual process of cutting away sin and the identification with Christ as a new birth a new start.</b>
<b>Circumcision was limited to males.</b>	<b>There is no distinction in Baptism between male or female.</b>

**Gen 17:13;** “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

**The Apostle Paul speaks of our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.**

**11 “and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;”**

**12 “having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”**

**13 “And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.**

**(Colossians 2:11-13;)**

**Gen 17:13;** “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

**Remember that a covenant is between two parties.  
The Lord agrees to give Abraham  
the above mentioned promises  
and Abraham is to “keep My (Yahweh’s) covenant.”**

**If Abraham’s descendants  
want to be recipients of God’s promises  
they too must keep the covenant agreement.**

**We learn something very valuable  
about covenants in this verse.**

**A covenant entails law to follow!**

**Consider the following verses:-**

**(Deut 29:9; Josh 23:16; Psa 78:10; 103:18; 105:8; 111:9; etc.)**

**Gen 17:14;** “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

**Notice that the one who refused the rite of circumcision was to be cut off from the people of God.**

**In the same way, the New Testament covenant (Heb 9:16-17;) knows virtually nothing of an unbaptized Christian.**

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” **Matt 28:19;**

“Peter's words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter replied, “Each of you must turn away from your sins and turn back to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:37-38;**

## **Covenant of Circumcision.**

**God changed Sarai's name to Sarah.**

**He promised Abraham a son by Sarah,  
his name would be Isaac. (17:16-19;)**

**Abraham pleaded with God for Ishmael.**

**God promised to bless Ishmael,  
but His covenant would be through Isaac.**

**Gen 17:15-16;** “Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

**Sarai's name is changed to Sarah.**

If there is any specific meaning behind this changed name, it has been **lost to us.**

Both renditions of her name seem to come from the Hebrew **sar**, meaning “**prince.**”

The **feminine version** could be alternately Sarai or Sarah which would refer to **a princess.**

Sarai is given a **new name** because of the accompanying promise that **she will bear a son.** This had **not been previously revealed.**  
**This was a new truth.**

**Gen 17:15-16;** “Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

In the same way that **Abraham** would be a **father of nations** and of **kings**, so also **Sarah** would be a **mother** to those **nations** and **kings**.

She who had previously been **barren** and unable to conceive **would give birth** to a son from whom would come **a multitude**.

Note that we learn what a true “**blessing**” is here. **Sarah would be blessed when God gave her the promise of a Son**.

Likewise, **we are blessed when we are recipients of God’s promises**. When I follow God’s authoritative commandments through walk of life and worship **I am blessed in that I have fellowship with God (the forgiveness of sins) and the hope of eternal salvation**.

**Gen 17:17-18;** “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee.”

Up to this time, **Abraham** had thought God was going to fulfill the promises of His covenant through **Ishmael**.

The Lord’s words regarding **Sarah bearing a son** came as a shock. **Abraham** must have experienced a barrage of **emotions** running from **shock to humour**.

He begins to **laugh**. The very idea of old **Sarah** who has been **barren for years, becoming pregnant!**

**Gen 17:17-18;** “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee.”

## **Abraham says two things.**

**The first he says to himself, we read that he said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”**

**He knew better than to say such things to God, but he could not help but to say them to himself. However, God knows our hearts.**

**What Abraham says to God is quite different. It is given in the form of a prayer:-**

**“Oh that Ishmael might live before You!”**

**After all, Ishmael was Abraham’s son. He was his only son. He had watched the boy grow up into a young man and he had high expectations for his son.**

**Gen 17:19-20;** “But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. “And as for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. .”

**Ishmael will not be without blessings.**

**He will also be fruitful and will multiply and become the father of twelve princes.**

**Notice the pattern:-**

**Ishmael** will become the father of 12 princes.

Jacob, the son of Isaac,  
will become the father of 12 tribes.

**Ishmael will be blessed, but it will be Isaac who will enjoy the benefit of a covenant with the Lord.**

**That special covenant relationship is reserved for Isaac and for his descendants.**

**Gen 17:21;** “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”

**Abraham had laughed** at hearing the prophecy of another son, but it will be **God who gets the last laugh.**

He instructed Abraham that this new son is to be named **Isaac.** It is a name that means “**laughter.**”

This will be an ongoing theme throughout the rest of the book of Genesis. It is a theme in which **the older son is bypassed in favour of the younger son.**

**This was completely contrary to the normal way things were done in the ancient world.**

**The firstborn had all of the rights; the second born had only the hand-me-downs.**

# **Challenges to Abraham's Faith.**

**Believed Ishmael was the son of promise.**

**Thought it impossible that he and Sarah  
could bear a child at such an old age.**

**Promises of descendants even more "intense."**

**Wearing a new name.**

**Circumcision.**

**Abraham Obeys God. (17:22-27;)**

# **Covenant of Circumcision.**

**Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised along with every male in his household.**

**Abraham was 99.**

**Ishmael was 13.**

**ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE. 17:22-27;**

**22. “And when He finished talking with him,  
God went up from Abraham.**

**23 Then Abraham took Ishmael his son,  
and all the servants who were born in his house  
and all who were bought with his money,  
every male among the men of Abraham's household,  
and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin  
in the very same day, as God had said to him.”**

**“Now Abraham was ninety nine years old  
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 very same day Abraham was circumcised,  
and Ishmael his son. 27 And all the men of his household,  
who were born in the house or bought with money  
from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.”**

# **ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE 17:22-27;**

**Abraham's response to the Lord's promises and the Lord's covenant was obedience.**

**He had both himself and his son and all of his servants and relatives and hired hands circumcised. This was the covenantal idea.**

**It was a covenant community. All who were related to Abraham would benefit from their relationship to him.**

# **ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE 17:22-27;**

That is **not** to say that **we** can be **saved** by having a Christian mother or a Christian father.

But we **OUGHT** to enjoy certain benefits from **having Christian parents.**

**We are set apart for certain special blessings by being in a covenant community.**

**Paul** makes reference to this when he speaks of the **importance of remaining in a marriage** when someone becomes **a Christian.**

# ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE 17:22-27;

“A woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.” 1 Corinthians 7:13-14;)

The same way that Abraham's extended family enjoyed the benefits of the covenant blessing through their relationship to him, so your extended family can enjoy the benefits of your relationship to Christ.

We are called to **share our blessing**, to **speak words** of blessing, and to **be a blessing** to others.

# **Lessons Learned from Genesis 16; and 17;**

**Man makes a mess of things** when trying to **help** God with His promises.

(Sarah's suggestion that Abraham take Hagar, together they have Ishmael. Sarah is despised by Hagar and treated badly to the point that Hagar leaves.)

**God has offered man  
the promise of eternal salvation today.**

**If we try to help God with His new covenant  
(such as doing things different than his covenant.)  
we too shall be guilty  
and make a mess of the Lord's plans.**

# **Lessons Learned from Genesis 16; and 17;**

## **The omnipotence of God.**

**(Rom 4:19; Gen 17:1, 17; 18:14;)**

**To be a recipient of God's gracious promises today?**

**(Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; 2:38-39; 13:23ff;  
Eph 2:1-10;)**

**We are challenged:-**

**“I am God Almighty; serve me faithfully  
and live a blameless life.”**

**(Gen 17:1; Heb 3:16-4:1, 11; 7:18-19; 10:1ff;)**

**Lessons Learned from Genesis 16; and 17;  
God's covenants with man  
entail law to be followed.**

**(Deut 29:9; Josh 23:16;  
Psa 78:10; 103:18; 105:8; 111:9 etc.)**

**Circumcision is a sign that one has heard  
God's laws and has put away unlawful living.**

**(Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:25;  
Ezek 44:7; Rom 2:27-29;)**

**Note that we learn what a true “blessing”  
is here. Sarah would be blessed when God gave  
her the promise of a Son. Likewise, we are blessed  
when we are recipients of God's promises through  
His Son. Gen 17:16; Eph 1:3-7;)**

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(cf. Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6;  
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**Genesis 16 and 17;  
Birth of Ishmael.  
Circumcision Covenant.  
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**Next in the series:-  
Gen chapter 18; God visits Abraham.**