

## **Day 16 - MONDAY: November 7th**

Genesis 17

Genesis 17:1-27 NKJV

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the

uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." 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 also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

**Daily Deep Dive:**

Verse 1 – Abram is now 99 years old. 13 years have passed since Ishmael was born. We are now 24 years from the time that God first promised to make Abram into a great nation. We can be critical of Abram and Sarai taking matters into their own hands at times, but this wait would have been excruciating. Sarai, 24 years later, still has no child. She is now 89 years old.

Verse 2 – God has made a number of Covenants already in the bible. Covenants in simple terms are binding agreements between two or more individuals and govern their relationship. They contain terms that allow the agreement to be in place and usually contained a sign that made the covenant binding.

God initiates this covenant and sets the terms with Abram.

Verse 5 – Abram’s name is changed from Abram meaning “Exalted father” to Abraham meaning “father of a multitude of nations” which we see God promised Abraham as part of this covenant (verse 4 & 6).

The UCG Bible Reading program states the following about their new names:

“Genesis 17 also records the renaming of Abram and Sarai. Up to Genesis 16 the Scriptures always use the birth names Abram, which means “Exalted Father,” and Sarai, meaning “Princess.” But, here in Genesis 17, God bestows new names on them. Abraham means “Father of a Multitude” and Sarah, while still retaining the sense of “Princess,” seems to mean one of an even higher station (e.g., it is derived from the same word translated “queen” in Isaiah 49:23). Interestingly, both new names differ from Abram and Sarai by the addition of one letter in the Hebrew—the letter He, pronounced, like the English H, as a breath of air, which is often a symbol of God’s Spirit. Though there may be no significance to

this, becoming new persons and circumcision can both picture spiritual conversion. In any event, whether Abraham and Sarah received the indwelling of God's Spirit at this particular time or not, we do know for certain that they did receive it at some point (compare 1 Peter 1:11)—for they will be in the Kingdom of God, and only the converted have that honor (Romans 8:9, Romans 8:11).” [END]

Verse 7 – God promises that this covenant wasn't just to Abraham, but also to his descendants forever to be their God. There were certainly physical blessings that God promised to Abraham and his descendants, but these promises went beyond the physical and pointed to even greater spiritual promises (Gal 3:6–9, 29) that would come through Jesus Christ and apply to God's church today.

Verse 10 – A term of God's covenant with Abraham and the descendants was that every male child would be circumcised. The Jewish people took this sign very seriously, because without this sign, they had no covenant with God (had no relationship) and without them being circumcised, the agreement was in breach.

We still get circumcised today, but under the New Covenant, it is different. Paul said in Romans 2:29 that “*but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter*”. Paul also told the church in Colossians 2:11 & 12 “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

Under the New Covenant, we enter into this covenant with God through baptism and God seals the covenant by giving us His Holy Spirit. It is God's Holy Spirit that makes us His people (Rom 8:9).

The UCG bible reading program brings out a neat scientific fact about circumcision on the eighth day as God commanded:

“Once again, the promises to Abram are expanded, this time to include a multitude of nations and kings. As a token of His covenant with Abram’s descendants, God commanded circumcision. It is a visible sign in the flesh of every male Israelite that they are part of a family with whom God has a special relationship and for whom God has a special work. Every male is to be circumcised on the eighth day of life. It is interesting to note that in male babies vitamin K—the blood clotting factor—rises sharply from birth and peaks on the eighth day, before declining to the normal level. While this could not have been known by Abram and the Israelites, it was perfectly well-known to God.” [END]

Verse 19 – After Abraham proposes that the promise might be fulfilled through Ishmael, God makes it clear, that Sarah was going to be a mother. God also instructs them to name the boy Isaac, meaning “he laughs”. God makes clear that his covenant with extend down through Isaac.

Verse 20 – God also blesses Ishmael and he would have 12 princes who names can be found in Gen 25:12–16.

Verse 23 – Immediate obedience at now 99 years of age.

Verse 25 – Ishmael is now 13 and would be 14 when Isaac was born.

Quite the age gap between siblings.