

GENESIS

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS TO CHAPTER 17

1. The revelation of the Abrahamic Covenant has been delivered by Yahweh revisiting and adding to it in parts over time revealing the span of its promises and conditions.
2. Chapter 17 once again revisits the Covenant now in its most comprehensive rendition.
3. From chapter 17 forward, divine speeches to Abraham and successors become rarer with little new information added to the promises, but the fulfillment of these promises becomes more apparent.
4. To fully appreciate and understand the importance of Yahweh's final long and elaborate speech concerning the Covenant, the student must recognize and understand the conditions of the Covenant as it unfolded.
5. The pact began in Gen.12:1-3 with promises to Abram of real estate, a great nation, personal blessing in time, recognition in name and being a blessing to all the families of the earth (e.g. salvation via a messianic descendant).
6. A key to the original pact is the singular of the noun "*nation/goiy*" inferring one race of people i.e., the Hebrews.
7. The promises began conditional upon Abram's obedience to the imperatives of 12:1.
8. "*The land*" (real estate) becomes "*this land*" after Abram entered Canaan in 12:7 and is further promised to his descendants.
9. The promise to his descendants partially uncovers an unconditional element to the Covenant.
10. After Abram fulfilled the final imperative to separate from his kin (Lot) in 13:14, "*this land*" becomes "*all the land which you see*" in 13:15 and this in perpetuity and Abram is specifically mentioned along with his descendants.
11. Further the promise of his descendants is described as many as the "*dust of the earth*" in 13:16.
12. The basic tenants of the Covenant at this point become unconditional for all concerned i.e., there is nothing more that Abram must do to be guaranteed real estate, a great nation and name, personal blessing and blessing to others such as producing the messianic heir.
13. The unconditional terms of the covenant are ratified in Chapter 15 whereas Yahweh validates that Abram himself would produce the heir and thus his descendants from his own loins (15:1-5) illustrating God's power providing the unconditional terms.
14. Then through ceremonial rite Yahweh cuts a unilateral real estate contract with Abram (15:7-21) further illustrating that God alone provides the unconditional terms.
15. Further the prophecy of 15:13-16 indicates that the Jewish race is dominant in view.
16. The unconditional reality revolved around the principle of faith in Yahweh apart from works being reckoned as righteousness in Gen.15:6.
17. So the basic tenants of the Covenant (the promise of a Hebrew race in national identity producing Messiah in the line of Abram in blessing) from 13:14ff became and will always remain unconditional.
18. In chapter 17, the terms of covenant again become conditional via the commands to Abram, "*Walk before me, and be blameless and I will establish My covenant...*" in vs.2.
19. Of necessity, the promises of chapter 17 must mean blessing associated with the Covenant over and beyond the guarantees to its unconditional terms.
20. This as it relates to Abram's personal blessing and national blessing in the land (cp.vs.8).

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21. That additional blessing would be bestowed upon Abram was alluded to in chapter 16 whereas Yahweh promised Hagar to multiply her descendants via Ishmael “*too many to count*”.
22. So Abram fathered a child that would add to his offspring apart from the Hebrew race.
23. Still, this achievement is dwarfed by the promises here.
24. As will be noted in the verses to follow, Abram is not merely to father a nation but a “*multitude of nations*” and “*kings will come forth*” from him (17:5,6).
25. Abram and Sarai’s names are changed to the more traditional Abraham and Sarah (17:5,15) to mark the superlative nature of these final covenantal details.
26. In addition Yahweh makes another pact with Abraham and his descendants to be “*God*” to them in perpetuity (17:7,8).
27. This pact is sealed with a new covenant of circumcision, also conditional (17:10), a sign symbolic to facilitating the blessings bestowed.
28. Those not adhering to this ritual will be “*will be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant*”.
29. Adherence to this ritual determines whether Abraham and his descendants will be blessed as a people or separated from the commonwealth.
30. So in chapter 17, conditional terms are presented that directly impact personal and national blessing in obedience to God or not.
31. In this chapter there are 5 divine speeches (vss.1b-2, 4-8, 9-14, 15-16, 19-21) with 2 questions by Abraham (vss.17,18).
32. The chapter is further divided into two scenes: The divine monologue (vss.1b-22) and the circumcision of Abraham’s household (vss.23-27).

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THE SUPERLATIVE BLESSINGS OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT VSS.1-22

GOD'S CLAIM, CONDITIONAL REQUISIT AND PROMISED PROGENY

EXEGESIS VERSES 1- 2:

וַיֵּהִי אַבְרָם בֶּן-תְּשַׁעִים שָׁנָה וְתֵשַׁע שָׁנִים וַיֵּרָא
 יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי-אֵל שְׁדֵי הַתְּהַלָּךְ לְפָנַי
 וְהָיָה תָמִים:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:1 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, (וַיֵּהִי אַבְרָם בֶּן שָׁנָה תְּשַׁעִים וְ שָׁנָה תֵשַׁע וַיֵּרָא רֵא וְ שָׁנָה תֵשַׁע וְ שָׁנָה תְּשַׁעִים בֶּן אַבְרָם הָיָה וְ) *[waw consec. + v/Qal/IPF/3ms: hayah; "and it came to pass"; + proper n: "Abram"; + n/com/m/s/constr: ben; "a son of"; + adj/b/pl/abs: tiseh-iyim; "ninety"; + n/com/f/s/abs: shanah; "years"; + waw conj. + adj/f/s/abs: tesha-; "nine"; + n/com/f/pl/abs: "shanah; "year"; + waw consec. + v/Niphal/IPF/3ms: ra'ah; "and He appeared"; + proper n: "Yahweh"; + prep: 'el + proper n: "to Abram"]]*

"I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. (פָּנֶה לְ הַלֵּךְ שְׁדֵי אֵל אֲנִי) *[pro/1cs: 'aniy; "I Myself"; + n/com/m/s/abs: 'el; "God"; + proper n: shaday {used 48x}; "Almighty"; "v/Hithpael/imp/m/s: halak; {form same as 6:9; 13:17} "you yourself walk"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/constr. w/1cs suff: paneh; "before me"; + waw consec. + v/qal/imp/m/s: hayah; "and become"; + adj/m/s/abs: tamiym {same as 6:9} "blameless/complete"]]*

וְאֶתְנָה בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ וְאֶרְבָּה אוֹתְךָ
 בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:2 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, (וְ בְרִית נָתַן וְ) *[waw conj. + v/qal/IPF/1cs {cohortative}: nathan; "and I will give/bestow"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: berith; "My covenant"; + prep. w/1cs suff: bayin; "between Me"; + waw conj. + prep. w/2ms suff: bayin; "and between you"]]*

And I will multiply you exceedingly." (וְ מְאֹד מְאֹד כִּי אֶת רַבָּה וְ) *[waw conj. + v/Hiphil/IPF/1cs: rabah; "I will cause to increase/multiply"; + sign of d.o. w/2ms suffix; "you"; + prep: bet + adv: me'od + adv: me'od; "with much more/exceedingly"]]*

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ANALYSIS VERSES 1 – 2:

1. Abram's life springs forward 13 years to when he **was ninety-nine years old** (cf.16:16).
2. The chronological reference dates the narrative 1847 BC and is hallmark in the life of **Abram** and Sarai.
3. This as it relates to their spiritual advance and maximum bestowment of Covenant blessing.
4. For 13 years, Sarai has remained unable to bear an heir and the situation is now hopeless from a medical point of view (cf.vs.17).
5. The mention of Abram's age is a reminder to the reader just how awesome the divine promise is.
6. For the 2nd time, Yahweh "**appeared to Abram**/rah'ah 'el Abram" in theophany (cf.12:7).
7. The 1st theophany unveiled the unconditional element of the Covenant as foundational in fulfilment, "*To your descendants I will give this land*" (cf.13:15).
8. The Lord's appearing on our present occasion is a reminder to **Abram** of the guaranteed certainty of producing the Hebrew race parallel to the promise of real estate.
9. That the future for Abram's descendants is secured in entitlement as a nation, what remains of importance is their experience in the land.
10. **Abram** is to be their primary example in that regard.
11. Yahweh then proclaims Himself followed with two imperatives, "**I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless**".
12. His use of title, "*'El Shadday (God Almighty)*" was a name familiar to the patriarchs (cp.28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3).
13. Moses correlates the name with Yahweh, the name not familiar to the patriarchs (cp.Exo.6:3), illustrating that both were One and the same.
14. Melchizedek knew **God** as El-Elyon (**God Most High**) while Hagar named Him El-Ra'iy (**God Who is seen/visible**)
15. *Shadday* on its own appears 31x in Job and occasionally elsewhere.
16. The combination *El-Shadday* occurs in Genesis, Exo.6:3 and Eze.10:5.
17. Various views on the meaning of *Shadday* have been advanced.
18. The LXX may transliterate the word (ex.: Eze.10:5; Σαδδαι) or assume it in the noun "**God/theos**" (ex.: Gen.28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; etc.) and sometimes translates it "**Almighty/pantokrator**" (ex.: 16x in Job).
19. Early Jewish etymology has it as "he who is sufficient" that may be its most correct meaning.
20. The word "**God/'el**" itself means "powerful" and to add "**almighty**" seems redundant.
21. "Shad" in the Hebrew means "breast".
22. The idea is that of sufficiency as it relates to the woman's reproductive cycle.
23. So **God** introduces Himself as the Powerful One that is sufficient with regard to bringing blessing.
24. In this case to all of the following blessings including the hopeless sexual state Abraham and Sarah found themselves in at age 99 and 90 respectively.
25. *El-Shaddy* is the **God** who so constrains nature that it bends to His will, and so subdues it that it bows to and serves grace.
26. The commands "**walk and be blameless**" harks back to Gen.12:1 in that the promises are based in part on Abraham's continued obedience to the directive will of **God**.

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27. That the Covenant begins conditionally illustrates that the promises associated with it, both unconditional and conditional, are contingent to obedience to God's directive will whether non-meritorious faith (Ph₁) or faith + works (Ph₂).
28. Ph₁ faith is called a "work" one time in the NT (Joh.6:28,29) illustrating the necessity of exerting active faith (+V) in believing the gospel (e.g., Gen.15:6).
29. The original condition illustrates what the covenant targets in its complete fulfillment for eternity i.e., +V.
30. The contingency now is that Abraham must continue to apply the divine directives to follow in order for the covenant promises to be fully realized in addition to its unconditional terms.
31. So the Abrahamic Covenant depended upon Abraham's +V (active faith to BD).
32. The 1st specialized command was to separate from his homeland and kin.
33. This brought about the unconditional aspects of the Covenant.
34. This illustrated the doctrine that saving faith separates +V from -V in spiritual relationship and citizenship. Cp.Phil.3:20 cf.Joh.15:19; 17:14,16
35. The commands now culminate in a 2nd specialized command to implement the rite of circumcision.
36. "**Walk before Me**/halak lamed paneh" refers to a life dedicated to serving **God** (cf.5:22,24; 6:9).
37. Before the deaths of Abraham and Jacob both speak of walking **before God**, claiming to have been devout throughout their lives (cf.24:40; 48:15).
38. "**Blameless**/tamiym" means "complete/sound" going hand in hand with "walking" referring to the divine assessment of one's Ph₂.
39. Examples include: Gen.6:9; Deu.18:13; Job 1:1,8; 2:3; 12:4; Psa.18:23,25,30,32; 19:13; 37:18,37; 51:4; 101:2,6; 119:1,80; Pro.2:21; 11:5,20; 13:6; 28:10; 29:10; Act.24:16; 1Cor.1:8; Eph.1:4; 5:27; Phi.1:10; 2:15; 3:6; Col.1:22; 2Pet.3:14; Jud.24; Rev.14:5
40. "**Blameless**" does not mean perfection or the absence of failure.
41. It does require R_B and if necessary reversion recovery.
42. In our context Abraham is told to conduct himself in such a manner and method as to not bring divine reproach for deviating from specific directives so that **God** will be free to bless him and his progeny under this covenant.
43. Vs.2 goes straight to the heart of the matter, "**And I will establish My covenant between Me and you**".
44. The NAS translation "**I will establish**" is in the Hebrew "**I will give**/nathan" and is used only here and in Gen.9:12 with the **covenant** as its object.
45. The imperfect form of *nathan* is cohortative in both form and meaning (Qamas He [ah] ending) and would literally be translated, "**let Me give**" with imperatival force.
46. It recognizes the contingency of Abram's volitional acceptance and agreement of "walking and being **blameless**" for the **covenant** to be fulfilled.
47. Hence a bilateral pact is necessary brought out in the Hebrew "**between Me and between you**/bayin waw bayin".
48. The over and beyond aspect of the **covenant** is then realized in the final clause, "**And I will multiply you exceedingly**".
49. The adverb "**exceedingly**" is repeated twice in the Hebrew, "**exceedingly, exceedingly**/me'od me'od".
50. It is blessing over and beyond the unconditional promises of Covenant.

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51. The promise of a multitude of descendants is a key theme of this chapter.
52. For faithfulness Ph₂, **God** is willing to enter into a level of **covenant between** Him and **Abram** that will far exceed expectations promised thus far.
53. This as it first applies to him personally and later it's affects upon his descendants.

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ABRAM'S ORIENTATION TO INHALE FAITH

EXEGESIS VERSE 3:

וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָם עַל-פְּנָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים
לְאָמֹר: ^{WTT} Genesis 17:3

^{NAS} Genesis 17:3 **And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,** (נפל ו) **נפל** לְאָמֹר לְאֱלֹהִים אֵת דְּבַר ו פָּנָה עַל אַבְרָם [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: naphal; "and he fell/prostrated"; + proper n: "Aberam"; + prep: -al + n/com/b/pl/constr. w/3ms suff: paneh; "upon his face"; + waw consec. + v/Piel/IPF/3ms: dabar; "and He intensely spoke"; + prep. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "with him"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "God"; + prep: lamed + v/qal/inf/constr: 'amar; "saying""]

ANALYSIS VERSE 3:

1. Vs.3 is Abram's response to God's appeal to let Him "give My covenant between Me and you" in vs.2a.
2. The challenge set before **Abram** is to remain positive Ph₂ and keep on "walking before Me and being blameless" in vs.1.
3. The promise is that **God** "will multiply you exceedingly, exceedingly" in vs.2b.
4. So, Abraham is exhorted to sustain +V securing maximum blessing from **God**.
5. In so doing he becomes the example for all of his descendants to follow. Cp.Joh.8:39,40; cf.Gal.3:6-9 for Ph₁
6. The phrase "**Abram fell on his face**/'Aberam naphal –al paneh" is a proper expression of awe before **God**. Cp.Lev.9:24; Jos.5:14; 7:6
7. It is an act of humility and willingness to accepting the truth in worship of **God**. Cf.1Cor.14:25
8. **Abram** prostrating indicated that he was willing to listen under inhale faith giving **God** his undivided attention.
9. It was overt evidence and example of the kind of +V he possessed.
10. **God** is free to then communicate with **Abram** the full complement of divine blessing in anticipation of and commensurate with his +V.
11. The Piel form of the verb "**talked**/dabar" emphasizes the content of the teaching spoken with authority.
12. The verb "**saying**/'amar" emphasizes the verbal communication of the teaching face-to-face.
13. Inhale faith (active faith of hearing and believing BD) is the first step for all believers to secure a successful Ph₂ and maximum blessing. Cp.Rom.10:17; Jam.1:19,20
14. The additional conditions for exhale faith (application of BD) as part of walking and being blameless are to follow.

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THE BLESSINGS DISCLOSED

EXEGESIS VERSES 4 – 8:

אֲנִי הִנֵּה בְרִיתִי אִתְּךָ וְהָיִיתָ לְאָב הַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם: ^{WTT} Genesis 17:4

^{NAS} Genesis 17:4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, (אֲתָ בְרִית הִנֵּה אֲנִי) [*pro/1cs: 'aniy; "I Myself/As for Me"; + part.interj: hinneh; "behold!"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: berith; "My covenant"; + prep. w/2ms suff: 'eth; "with you"]*)

And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. (וְהָיָה לְךָ אָב לְהַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם) [*waw consec. + v/qal/PF/2ms: hayah; "and you will become"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr: 'ab; "for a father of"; + n/com/m/s/constr: hamon; {lit. cry aloud/tumult/clamorous} "a multitude of/abundance of"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: goy; "nations"]*)

וְלֹא־יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָם וְהָיָה שְׁמֶךָ
אַבְרָהָם כִּי אֲבִי־הַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם נִתְּתִיד: ^{WTT} Genesis 17:5

^{NAS} Genesis 17:5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; (וְלֹא יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת שֵׁם אַבְרָם וְהָיָה שֵׁם אֲבִרָהָם) [*waw conj. + neg.part: lo' + v/Niphal/IPF/3ms; qara; "and it will not be called"; + adv: -od; "again/any longer"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: shem; "your name"; + proper n: "Abram"; + waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3ms: hayah; "but it will become"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: shem; "your name"; + proper n: 'abraham {lit. father of nations}; "Abraham"]*)

For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. (כִּי נָתַן גּוֹי הַמּוֹן אֲבִי) [*conj: kiy + n/com/m/s/constr: 'ab; "for a father of"; + n/com/m/s/constr: hamon; "a multitude of"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: goy; "nations"; + v/qal/PF/1cs w/2ms suff: nathan; "I gave you" {note past tense; near context ref. to Hagar's pregnancy}}]*)

וְהִפְרֵתִי אִתְּךָ בְּמֵאֵד בְּמֵאֵד וְנִתְּתִיד לְגוֹיִם
וּמְלָכִים מִמֶּךָ יֵצְאוּ: ^{WTT} Genesis 17:6

^{NAS} Genesis 17:6 "And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, (וְהִפְרֵתִי אִתְּךָ בְּמֵאֵד בְּמֵאֵד) [*waw consec. + v/Hiphil/PF/1cs: parah; "And I will cause to bear fruit/make"; + sign of d.o. w/2ms suff: 'eth; "you"; + prep: bet + adv: me'od + adv: me'od; "by very much exceedingly"]*)

and I will make nations of you, (וְנָתַן גּוֹי לְךָ) [*waw consec. + v/qal/PF/1cs w/2ms suff: nathan; "and I will give you/make you"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/abs: goy; "for nations"]*)

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and kings shall come forth from you. (וַיֵּצֵא מִן מֶלֶךְ 7) [waw conj. + n/com/m/pl/abs: melek; "and kings"; + prep. w/2ms suff: min; "from you"; + v/qal/IPF/3mpl: yatsa; "will come/go forth")]

וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ וּבֵין זַרְעֶךָ ^{WTT} Genesis 17:7
 אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדֹרֹתָם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם לְהָיוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים וּלְזַרְעֶךָ
 אַחֲרֶיךָ

^{NAS} Genesis 17:7 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you (וַיֵּצֵא מִן מֶלֶךְ 7) [waw consec. + v/Hiphil/PF/1cs: qum; "and I will cause to stand"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: berith; "My covenant"; + prep. w/1cs suff: bayin + waw conj. + prep. w/2ms suff: bayin; "between Me and between you"])

and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, (וַיֵּצֵא מִן מֶלֶךְ 7) [waw conj. + prep: bayin + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: zera-; "and between your seed/descendants"; + adv. w/2ms suff: 'acharey; "after you"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/constr. w/3mp suff: dor; "for their generations"; + prep: lamed + n/com/f/s/constr: berith + n/com/m/s/abs: -olam; "for a covenant forever/everlasting"])

to be God to you and to your descendants after you. (וַיֵּצֵא מִן מֶלֶךְ 7) [prep: lamed + v/qal/inf/constr: hayah; "to become" {emphasizes purpose of covenant}; + prep. w/2ms suff: lamed; "for you"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "to God"; + waw conj. + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: zera- + adv. w/2ms suff: 'acharey; "and for your descendants after you"])

וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִגְרֶיךָ ^{WTT} Genesis 17:8
 אֶת־כָּל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן לְאַחֲזַת עוֹלָם וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים

^{NAS} Genesis 17:8 "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, (וַיֵּצֵא מִן מֶלֶךְ 7) [waw consec. + v/qal/PF/1cs: nathan; "and I will give"; + prep. w/2ms suff: lamed; "to you"; + waw conj. + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: zera- + adv. w/2ms suff: 'acharey; "and to your descendants after you"])

the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, (וַיֵּצֵא מִן מֶלֶךְ 7) [sign of d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr: 'erets; "the land of"; + n/com/m/pl/constr. w/2ms suff: magor; "your sojournings"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/f/s/constr: 'erets + proper n: kena-an; "all the land of Canaan"])

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for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (לֹא אֶחָזְקָה לְעוֹלָם וְאֵנִי הָיִיתִי לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים [prep: lamed + n/com/f/s/constr: 'achuzzah; "for a possession of"; + n/com/m/s/abs: -olam; "everlasting"; + waw consec. + v/qal/PF/1cs: hayah; "and I will become"; + prep. w/3mpl suff: lamed; "for them"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "to God"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 4 – 8:

1. The emphatic Hebrew phrase “**I Myself, Behold!**/'aniy hinneh” emphasizes what God is doing and will do on His part in bestowing the blessings noted in the English “**As for Me**”.
2. This aspect of the **covenant** is all-embracing, particularly the promise of **descendants** of which the chapter returns again and again.
3. The **covenant** itself is **with** Abram whom God deems qualified to be the direct recipient of blessing.
4. The inclusion of his progeny (vss.7,8) finds foundation in blessing by association with **Abram**.
5. As vs.9 makes clear, the blessings for all remain conditional upon keeping the Ph₂ terms of the covenant signified in the rite of circumcision (vss.10ff).
6. So the Abrahamic **Covenant** has both Ph₁ and Ph₂ elements of promise.
7. For **Abram**, the promise expands from being a singular nation beyond count (Gen.12:2; 13:16; 15:5) to “**a multitude of nations/hamon goy**”.
8. The Hebrew word “**multitude** (*hamon*)” has as its root meaning “make noise/tumult” and colorfully pictures the “hustle and bustle” of humanity striving to live with one another.
9. These **nations** are those other than the Israelites and include the **descendants** of Ishmael (12 tribes; Gen.25:12-16), the six sons by Keturah (25:2) and their sons (25:3-4) forming the bulk of the Arab world.
10. Then there was the nation of Edom through Isaac (Gen.25:30; 32:3; 36:1).
11. To mark Abraham’s qualification for such blessing, God changes his **name** from **Abram** to **Abraham** (vs.5).
12. His new **name** means “**father of nations**”.
13. The **name** change is usually recognized by interpreters as a mark of spiritual maturity.
14. Further it anticipates **Abraham** completing his course otherwise as it guarantees that he will **father** many **nations**.
15. The cause giving foundation for the **name** change began with Hagar’s pregnancy and the anticipated birth of Ishmael in vs.5b (cf.16:10).
16. This is the force of the Hebrew Qal Perfect form of “**made you/gave you/nathan**” that is an active past tense indicating the origin of the promise retroactive through Hagar/Ishmael.
17. So what started as STA pursuits in the household under operation Hagar, God turns into blessing on behalf of +V.
18. Obviously all concerned were positive believers (Sarai, Hagar and Abram) and what failures they may have had did not deter God from blessing them otherwise.
19. This illustrates that blessing is not about being perfect, but +V to BD.
20. Again the Hebrew *hamon* (**multitude**/tumult) is used to now picture the contemptuous nature of the Arab race finding its basis through Ishmael (16:12).

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21. Vs.6 is not being redundant, “**And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you**”.
22. The Hebrew of the phrase “**make you exceedingly fruitful**/pharah ‘eth me’od me’od” means Abraham’s reproduction results were to be almost unbelievable.
23. In reality, **Abraham** only fathered Isaac, Ishmael and the 6 sons of Keturah, which number of children is not uncommon.
24. So what are we to make of this promise?
25. The key in part is seen in the second clause in vs.6b literally in the Hebrew, “**and I will give you for nations**/waw nathan (w/2ms suff.) lamed goy”.
26. The Hebrew implies that Abraham’s offspring blessing is offered to **nations** overall.
27. This aspect of the promise looks forward to the full magnitude of descendant blessing as children of **Abraham**.
28. Its intent is unraveled with Gal.3:8; “*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’*”.
29. The reproduction promise is not limited to sexual, but includes Abraham’s spiritual offspring.
30. It is realized through his seed Jesus Christ.
31. Because of Abraham’s +V and faithfulness to God’s plan, through the covenant blessings he is offered to the Gentile world to be blessed by association. Cp.Gal.3:9 “*So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*”
32. He is offered to the **nations** so they may attain salvation “*in*” him via Messiah.
33. As the **covenant** promises are founded in **Abraham**, **God** indeed causes him to “*to bear fruit more and more*”.
34. This aspect of the **covenant** promises was realized in the symbolism behind the prophecy of Gen.15:13-16 (*see analysis*) that set the ground work for interpreting vs.6.
35. The final clause in vs.6c, “**and kings shall come forth from you**” recognizes the lines of royalty in the line of **Abraham**.
36. Racially his other sons (apart from Isaac) and their sons founded royal dynasties.
37. Spiritually it recognizes the royal priesthood of the Church. Cf.1Pet.2:9
38. Those of the Church who fulfill their Ph₂ course will reign with Christ in the highest of positions in Ph₃. Cp.Rev.5:10 cf.2:26
39. In vs.7, **God** records the full extent of the covenant blessings as it extends to Abraham’s descendants forever.
40. The first phrase, “**and I will establish**” is literally in the Hebrew “**and I will cause to stand**/waw + Hiphil of qum”.
41. The power behind the Abrahamic blessings finds its security in God’s omnipotence ensuring all is fulfilled as promised.
42. The additional phrase “**throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant**/lamed dor lamed berith –olam” embodies the completeness of generational history into eternity.
43. No matter what dispensation the **generations** of Abraham’s descendants may live (Age of Israel, Church Age, Millennium into the Eternal State), **God** stands behind the **covenant**.
44. And the ultimate purpose of establishing the **covenant** is succinctly stated in vs.7c, “**to be God to you and to your descendants after you**”.
45. The Abrahamic **Covenant** is for the purpose of **Abraham** and his offspring to have a relationship with **God** providing maximum blessing.

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46. 6x the Hebrew preposition *lamed*, denoting motion or direction, is used in vs.7 to illustrate this relationship.
47. 5x it is used of the **covenant** directed “**to/for**” **Abraham** and his **descendants** “**to/for an everlasting covenant**”; 1x as it is directed “**to God**” in fulfillment of its purpose.
48. So the **covenant** targets man into eternity reciprocating **to God** based on the covenant’s terms (*walk before Me and be blameless*).
49. In vs.8, the promises return to the real estate portion of the **covenant**.
50. The parameters of occupancy now include “**all the land of Canaan**/kol ‘erets kena-an”.
51. This is geographically more comprehensive than the last mention in the real estate abstract of Gen.15:18-21 highlighting only North/South boundaries of the Euphrates and river of Egypt.
52. The inclusion of Abraham’s “**sojournings**/magor” suggests that he has traveled both width and length of **Canaan** over the past years having first-hand knowledge of its vast landscape (cf.13:17).
53. The full boundaries of the promised **land** include all territory from the River of Egypt spanning from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea (Gen.15:18; Exo.23:31) as its Southern border; the Mediterranean as its West border (Num.34:6); the Euphrates as its Northern border (Gen.15:18; Deu.11:24; Jos.1:4); and from northeast of the Sea of Galilee following the Jordan back south to the Dead Sea as its Eastern border (Num.34:11-12). Cp.Eze.47:15-20
54. Israel has yet to ever occupy **all the land**.
55. This fact in itself points to the far reaching emphasis of the **covenant**.
56. To match the time frame of an “**everlasting** (*-olam*) **covenant** (vs.7b), **the land** is “**for an everlasting possession**/lamed ‘achuzzah –olam”.
57. A hint at when the full complement of real estate is realized is found in the Hebrew *-olam* (**everlasting**).
58. It is when their “**Everlasting King**/-olam melek” takes reign in the Millennium. Cp.Jer.10:10
59. The final clause of future certainty “**and I will become their God**/waw hayah lamed lamed ‘elohim” supports this suggestion.
60. This interpretation assumes the Jewish race as “God’s chosen race of people” (unconditional portion of the covenant), but further allows the inclusion of Abrahamic heritage spiritually as recipients of the promises for maximum blessing.
61. For OT and CA saints, the eternal “**possession**/achuzzah” becomes experience at the 2nd Advent enjoying maximum blessing in resurrection bodies. Cf.Mat.19:28
62. The superlative features of covenantal blessings for those of the faith are designed to coordinate with Messiah taking **possession** of the **nations** and “*very ends of the earth*” (Psa.2:8).
63. From the Millennium forward into eternity, Christ will reign as **God** with the real estate promise finding its apex in the New Jerusalem. Cp.Heb.11:10
64. The superlative promises of the Abrahamic **Covenant** foresees the future into eternity and consolidates both OT and CA saints into its fold of fulfillment.

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INTRODUCTION TO VSS.9-14 AND RITE OF CIRCUMCISION

1. Vss.9-14 constitute the central and longest section of divine speeches.
2. The matter for discussion is the rite of circumcision.
3. Both terms “covenant (*beriyth*)” and “circumcise (*mul*)” occur 6x.
4. The term “flesh (*basar*)” occurs 3x and “foreskin (*-arelah*)” 2x.
5. The mandate underwriting the observance of the covenant is enunciated in vs.9.
6. This means the circumcision of all males (vs.10).
7. This is the sign of the covenant (vs.11).
8. It involves circumcising eight-day old boys and slaves that join the household (vss.12-13).
9. To remain uncircumcised is to break the covenant and leads to excommunication (vs.14).
10. The rite of circumcision i.e., the removal of the foreskin on the penis, is practiced in many parts of the world by different cultures.
11. Only in Europe and Central and East Asia is the custom unknown.
12. In the ancient Near East, the majority of Israel’s neighbors practiced circumcision, including the Egyptians, Canaanites and Arabs. Cf.Jer.9:25-26
13. Among Israel’s immediate neighbors, the Philistines, frequently and disparagingly referred to as the uncircumcised (Judg.14:3), along with the Shechemites that are described as Hivites, were also uncircumcised (Gen.34:2,13-14).
14. It seems unlikely that circumcision was practiced in Mesopotamia.
15. This is suggested by Eze.32:21-23 and by the fact that Abraham was not circumcised until he came to Canaan.
16. The significance of circumcision has been much debated, but those that practice it have no real explanation save tradition.
17. Philo (*Special Laws*, 1:2-11) lists 4 reasons given by others for circumcision: For health, to protect from infection; for purification; for teaching the similarity between procreation and thought; for improving fertility.
18. According to Gen.17, circumcision marks one as a member of the covenant community.
19. Every Israelite male must be circumcised (17:10-11).
20. Those that refuse to be circumcised are warned that they are liable to be “*cut off from his people*” (17:14).
21. This sentence of extirpation (completely removed; medically “by surgery”) is often mentioned in Leviticus (e.g., 7:20-21; 17:4).
22. However, circumcision is more specifically called “*the sign of the covenant*” (17:11).
23. There are 3 kinds of “signs (*’oth*).
24. There are proof signs that convince the observer about something.
25. The Egyptian plagues were intended to persuade Pharaoh and Israel of who and what the Lord is. Exo.7:3-5
26. Second, certain acts such as acted prophecies are signs that resemble the situation announced. Eze.4:3
27. Third, certain signs are mnemonic (reminders) regarding something.
28. The eating of unleavened bread reminds Israel of the exodus and reminds them to keep the law. Cf.Exo.13:7-9
29. The Sabbath is a sign reminding the people of Israel that they are to be a holy people. Cf.Exo.31:13

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30. Closest to all the usage, Gen.17 harks back to 9:12-17, where the rainbow is said to be the sign of the covenant between God and mankind.
31. The rainbow reminds God of His promise never to destroy the earth with another flood.
32. Circumcision was intended to remind Israel of its status as a people who like Abraham were to “*walk in My presence and be blameless*” (Gen.17:1).
33. The permanent marking of the body reflects the eternal nature of the covenant between God and Israel (Gen.17:13,19).
34. The marking of a man’s most intimate member with the sign of the covenant coupled with the call to blamelessness (e.g., the 3 adjustments to God) may well have prompted criticism of the Jews by the prophet Jeremiah as uncircumcised of heart and ears. Cp.Jer.6:10 (*closed/uncircumcised/-arelah*); 9:25-26
35. Circumcision reminded them to isolate their STA’s and serve God with heart, soul and strength...*see Doctrine of circumcision.*
36. The foreskin represents that which is dead to the plan of God and hence the need to remove it.
37. It represents human good, human viewpoint and sinful behavior.
38. At salvation the indwelling STA is isolated for the first time and repeated use of Rebound keeps it isolated.
39. This is documented in Col.2:11: “*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*”.
40. Another proof text is Col.2:13: “*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*”.
41. The MAJG greatly enhances the isolation process.
42. That circumcision is applied as to both body and Spirit, see Rom.2:29.
43. Abraham observed the rite of circumcision when he reached maturity at age 99. Cf.Rom.4:11-12
44. The ritual of circumcision is not for the present dispensation, but only for Jews. Cf.1Cor.7:18-19; Gal.5:6; 6:15
45. The true circumcision is those that worship God, celebrate who and what Christ is and take no confidence in the flesh (e.g., foreskin). Cf.Phil.3:3
46. This doctrinally ties in with Jer.9:26, “*and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart*”.
47. It is a matter of ritual versus reality for the Jew living in the age of Israel.

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THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION INSTITUTED

EXEGESIS VERSES 9 – 14:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם וְאַתָּה אֶת־בְּרִיתִי
תִּשְׁמֹר אֶתָּה וְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ לְדֹרֹתָם:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:9 **God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant,** (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל אַבְרָהָם וְאַתָּה אֶת בְּרִית אֶת אֶתָּה וְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ לְדֹרֹתָם [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim + prep: 'el + proper n: 'abraham; "and He said, God, to Abraham"; + waw conj. + pro.2ms: 'attah; "you, yourself"; + sign of the d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: beriyth; "My covenant"; + v/qal/IPF/2ms: shamar; "you will keep/guard/observe"])

you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. (אַחֲרָיִךְ זַרְעֲךָ וְאַתָּה לְ
דֹרֹתָם [pro/2ms: 'attah + waw conj. + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: zera-; "you and your seed/descendants"; + adv. w/2ms suff: 'acherey; "after you"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/constr. w/3mpl suff: dor; "throughout their generations"])

זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין
זַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ הַמּוֹלֵד לָכֶם כָּל־זָכָר:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:10 **"This is My covenant, which you shall keep,** (זֹאת בְּרִית אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ
[adj/f/s: zo'th; "this" + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: beriyth; "My covenant"; + rel.pro: 'asher + v/qal/IPF/2/m/pl: shamar; "which you all will keep"])

between Me and you and your descendants after you: (בֵּין אֲנִי וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ
[prep. w/1cs suff: bayin + waw conj. + prep. w/2mpl suff: bayin + waw conj. + prep: bayin + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: zera- + adv. w/2ms suff: 'acherey; "between Me and between you all and between your seed/descendants after you"])

every male among you shall be circumcised. (כָּל־זָכָר לְמוֹלֵד לָכֶם
[v/Niphal/inf/abs: mul; "to be circumcised"; + prep. w/2mpl suff: lamed; "among you all"; + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/m/s/abs: zakar; "every male"])

וּנְמַלְתֶּם אֶת בְּשַׂר עַרְלַתְכֶם וְהָיָה לְאוֹת
בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:11 **"And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin;** (וּנְמַלְתֶּם אֶת
בְּשַׂר עַרְלַתְכֶם [waw consec. + v/Niphal/PF/2mpl: mul; "and you will be circumcised"; +

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sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: bashar; "the flesh of"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2mpl suff: -arelah; {lit. the uncircumcised} "your foreskin"])

and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. (וְהָיָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ [waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3ms: hayah; "and it will become"; + prep: lamed + n/com/b/s/constr: 'oth; "for a sign of"; + n/com/f/s/abs: beriyth + prep. w/1cs suff: bayin + waw conj. + prep. w/2mpl suff: bayin; "the covenant between Me and between you all"])

וּבְנֵי-שְׁמוֹנֶה יָמִים יִמּוֹל לָכֶם כָּל-זָכָר
לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם יֶלֶד בֵּית וּמִקְנֵה-כֶּסֶף מִכָּל בֶּן-נֶכֶר אֲשֶׁר לֹא
מִזֶּרְעֶךָ הוּא׃

WTT Genesis 17:12

^{NAS} Genesis 17:12 "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, (וְהָיָה לְזָכָר כָּל לְמוֹל יוֹם שְׁמוֹנֶה בֵּן וְ) [waw conj. + n/com/m/s/constr: ben; "and a son of"; + adj/m/s/constr: shemoneh; "eight"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: yom; "days"; + v/Niphal/IPF/3ms: mul; "will be circumcised"; + prep. w/2mpl suff: lamed; "among you all"; + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/m/s/abs: zakar; "every male"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/constr. w/2mpl suff: dor; "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. (מִן לֹא אֲשֶׁר נָכַר בֵּן כָּל מִן כֶּסֶף מִקְנֵה וּ בֵּית יֶלֶד) [adj/m/s/constr: yaliyd; "one born of"; + n/com/m/s/abs: bayith; "the house"; + waw conj. + n/com/f/s/constr: miqenah; "or purchased/bought/an acquisition with"; + n/com/m/s/abs: keseph; "silver/money"; + prep: min + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/m/s/constr: ben; "from any son of"; + n/com/m/s/abs: nekar; "that foreign/a foreigner"; + rel. pro: 'asher + neg: lo' + prep: min + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: zera- + pro/3ms: hu'; "which is not from your descendants himself"])

וְהָיָה הַמּוֹל יִמּוֹל יֶלֶד בֵּיתְךָ וּמִקְנֵה כֶּסֶף
וְהָיָה בְרִיתִי בְּבִשְׂרְכֶם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם׃

WTT Genesis 17:13

^{NAS} Genesis 17:13 "A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; (וְהָיָה מוֹל מוֹל יֶלֶד בֵּיתְךָ וּמִקְנֵה כֶּסֶף [v/Niphal/inf/abs: mul + v/Niphal/IPF/3ms mul; "circumcising you will circumcise"; + adj/m/s/constr: yaliyd; "one born of"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: bayith; "your house"; + waw conj. + n/com/f/s/constr: miqenah; "and acquired with"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: keseph; "your money"])

thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. (וְהָיָה בְּרִית דִּוְיָ) [waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3fs: hayah + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: berith; "and it will become My covenant"; + prep: bet + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2mpl suff: bashar;

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"in your flesh"; + prep: lamed + n/com/f/s/constr: beriyth _ n/com/m/s/abs: -olam; "for a covenant everlasting"])

וְעָרְלָהּ וְזָכַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יְמוּל אֶת־בְּשָׂרָהּ עָרְלָתוֹ
וְנִכְרְתָהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת מֵעַמִּיָּה אֶת־בְּרִיתִי הַזֶּה: ס

^{NAS} Genesis 17:14 "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, (וְעָרְלָהּ וְזָכַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְמוּל אֶת בְּשָׂרָהּ עָרְלָתוֹ [waw conj. + adj/m/s/abs: -arel; "and an uncircumcised/having foreskin"; + n/com/m/s/abs: zakar; "male"; + rel.pro: 'asher + neg: lo' + v/Niphal/IPF/3ms: mul; "who will not be circumcised"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: bashar + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: -arelah; "in the flesh of his foreskin"]) **that person shall be cut off from his people;** (וְנִכְרְתָהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת מֵעַמִּיָּה אֶת־בְּרִיתִי הַזֶּה [waw consec. + v/Niphal/PF/3fs: karath; "then he will be cut off"; + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: nephesh; "that one's soul/that person"; + d.a. + pro/3fs: hiy'; "the one itself"; + prep: min + n/com/m/pl/constr. w/3fs suff: -am; "from its people"]) **he has broken My covenant."** (ס פָּרַר בְּרִיתִי אֵת) [sign of d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: beriyth; "My covenant"; + v/Hiphil/PF/3ms: pharar; "he has caused to break"; + end of para: samek])

ANALYSIS VERSES 9 – 14:

1. In vss.3-8, **God** guaranteed His part of the **covenant** for Ph₂ faithfulness.
2. This as it related to Abraham's propagation of nations on his part (vss.4-6) and the extent of real estate that he and his descendants would possess i.e., all of Canaan (vs.8).
3. In vs.9, **God** charges **Abraham** with keeping the conditional terms of the **covenant** on his part noted in the phrase "**Now as for you**/waw 'attah".
4. Exhale faith is now required in compliment to inhale faith illustrated in vs.3.
5. The verb "**keep**/shamar" means to "guard/observe" looking to the observer to insure its terms are applied according to plan.
6. **God further** extends the charge to Abraham's "**descendants after you throughout their generations**".
7. The "**seed/zera**-" in view is now limited to Abraham's offspring of racial Jews reproduced through Sarah (cp. its use in vs.12 in contrast to any not of the Hebrew race).
8. The same expectation for **Abraham** to be an example as to the terms of the **covenant** emphasized in vs.1 is now levied upon his **descendants**.
9. The requirement is timeless for as long as the **descendants** of **Abraham** are present in history.
10. The Ph₂ part of the **covenant** is a requirement for all **male** members of the community to be **circumcised**.
11. Female **circumcision**, though practiced by some peoples, is by its omission not to be practiced among the chosen people.

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12. The OT assumes **male circumcision** after the fact and incorporated into the Law. Cf.Exo.12:44,48; Lev.12:3
13. It is a rite designed to remind Israel of their responsibilities in the POG unconditionally guaranteed through the **covenant** (e.g., a promised heir and real estate).
14. The command to **keep the covenant** is repeated in vs.10, this time in the plural, “**which you all will keep**”.
15. The **covenant** remains bilateral per the clause “**between Me and between you and between your descendants after you**”.
16. God’s obligations are parallel to Israel’s fidelity to their obligations.
17. The ritual itself is then succinctly stated, “**every male among you shall be circumcised**”.
18. In vs.11, the regulation then goes into specific detail.
19. First, it specifies where in the male anatomy the rite is to be performed i.e., “**the flesh of your foreskin/bashar –arelah**”.
20. Literally, *-arelah* reads, “**of your uncircumcision**”. Cp.Gen.34:14; Jer.9:24
21. **God** then informs **Abraham** that this procedure is “**the sign of the covenant**’oth beriyth”.
22. This intimate **sign** points to the necessity of the isolation of the ISTA via the SAJG and R_BAJG.
23. **Abraham**, the founder of the Hebrew race and first participant of the **covenant** promises was not **circumcised** until many years after he possessed the reality (e.g., salvation by faith). Cp.Rom.4:9-12
24. So physical **circumcision** is ritual, not reality, as recognized by Paul (Rom.4:9-10).
25. In vs.12, the timing and subjects of **circumcision** are defined more precisely whereas “**every male among you**” (cp.vs.10) covers all baby boys “**eight days old/shemoneh yom**”.
26. That only **males** are subject to **circumcision** probably teaches that a **male** will resolve the issue of the STA i.e., Jesus Christ (cp.Col.2:11).
27. This follows the premise that the **male** is the transmitter of the ISTA and only in the **male** DNA is a solution found.
28. The eighth day may further celebrate/symbolize the eternal state (7000 yrs. of creation, then the day of **God**; 2Pet.3:12) where the issue of the STA is forever remedied for the eternal offspring of nations in human bodies via the leaves of the tree of life (Rev.22:2). *See Doctrine of the Day of God and Eternal State*
29. **Circumcision** is to include all boys “**born in the household/yaliyd bayith**”, freeborn or sons of slaves.
30. In their case, **circumcision** is done on the eighth day after birth.
31. Also, **males** “**bought with money from any foreigners/miqenah keseph min kol ben nekar**”.
32. Vs.13 reiterates that all **male** members of the **household** (community), whatever their origin are to receive this marking in their **flesh** as the covenant symbol.
33. The divine speech ends with warning in vs.14 for any **male** reluctant to undergo **circumcision**.
34. “**An uncircumcised male...shall be cut off** (pun intended) **from his people**”.
35. The threat of punishment is designed as a deterrent to noncompliance.
36. To such a person the threat of divine punishment hovers over the one guilty of a sin of omission (vs. commission).
37. Such a person lives with the fact that at any time he could suffer excommunication by the authorities and ultimately the SUD at God’s hand.

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38. The clause “**he has broken My covenant/beriyth pharar**” stands opposite of observing it (vss.9,10).
39. **God** observes and confirms covenants; He never breaks them. Judg.2:1
40. A non-observer simply brings on himself the threat connected with this **covenant**.
41. It was ritual, not reality, but carried a tough sentence for violators i.e., separation.
42. The sole **covenant** requirement is with the native Israelite as well as any **male** who whatever the circumstances joins the society of Israel.
43. The doctrinal significance of threat upon the non-compliant points to the punishment connected with failure to make even the SAJG, which is of course eternal condemnation.
44. That it is a “works” requirement illustrates the perfect work of one without ISTA/sin in perfect obedience to **God** fulfilling the Law as remedy to the ISTA. Cp.Isa.7:14; Mat.1:23,25; 5:17; Heb.4:15 cf.Joh.4:34
45. **Circumcision** was not required for believing Gentiles not part of the community of Israel.

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GOD'S PROMISE TO SARAH

EXEGESIS VERSES 15 – 16:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם שְׂרַי אִשְׁתְּךָ
לֹא־תִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ שְׂרַי כִּי שָׂרָה שְׁמָהּ:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, (אֱלֹהִים אָמַר ו) אִשְׁתְּךָ שְׂרַי אִשְׁתְּךָ אֶבְרָהָם אֶל [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim + prep: 'el + proper n: 'abraham; "and He said, God, to Abraham"; + proper n: "Sarai"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2ms suff: 'ishshah; "your wife"])

you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. (שְׂרַי שֵׁם אֶת קְרָא לֹא) שְׂרַי שֵׁם אֶת קְרָא לֹא [neg. part: lo' + v/qal/IPF/2ms; qara'; "you will not call"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3fs suff: shem; "her name"; + proper n: "Sarai"; + conj: kiy + proper n: sarah; {lit: princess} "because Sarah"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3fs suff: shem; "will be her name"])

וּבִרְכָתִי אֶתָּה וְגַם נָתַתִּי מִמֶּנָּה לְךָ בֵּן
וּבִרְכָתֶיהָ וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹיִם מְלֻכֵי עַמִּים מִמֶּנָּה יֵהְיוּ:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:16 "And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. (בְּרַךְ ו) אֶת בֵּן לְ מִן נָתַן גַּם ו אֶת [waw consec. + v/qal/PF/1cs: barak; "and I will bless"; + sign of d.o. w/3fs suff: 'eth; "her"; + waw conj. + conj: gam; "and indeed"; + v/qal/PF/1cs: nathan; "I will give"; + prep. w/3fs suff: min; "from her"; + prep. w/2ms suff: lamed; "to you"; + n/com/m/s/abs: ben; "a son"])

Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; (גוֹי לְ הִיָּה ו בְּרַךְ ו) גוֹי לְ הִיָּה ו בְּרַךְ ו [waw consec. + v/qal/PF/1cs w/3fs suff: barak; "and I will bless her"; + waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3fs: hayah; "and she will become"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/pl/abs: goyim; "for nations" {a mother of nations}})]

kings of peoples shall come from her." (מִן עַם מְלֻכֵי) מִן עַם מְלֻכֵי [n/com/m/pl/constr: melek; "kings of"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: -am; "peoples"; + prep. w/3fs suff: min + v/qal/IPF/3mpl: hayah; "from her they will come to pass"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 15 – 16:

1. Vs.15 begins a new paragraph in the Hebrew text.
2. While the theophany of vs.1 is sustained, the subject matter changes.
3. The divine speech now turns attention to **Sarai**, Abraham's **wife** (*ishshah*).

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4. For the first time since the beginning of covenant revelation (Gen.12:1) in 1876 BC (some 29 years later), a promise is specifically addressed to **Sarai**.
5. While Yahweh has promised to bless Abraham with descendants, any explicit reference to **Sarai** in propagation has been omitted, though hinted at in 15:4 “*who shall come forth from your loins*”.
6. As we have seen, to fully conclude that **Sarai** would be the *mother* remained aloof via operation Hagar in chapter 16.
7. Their lack of understanding was not due to an overall lack of faith i.e., -V (cp.Heb.11:11), but of GAPing certain revelation.
8. The remedy was maintaining spiritual advance and growth.
9. It has now been some 13 years since the Hagar incident.
10. Over time, faith grows and understanding of doctrine with it.
11. Doctrine in turn confirms the spiritual adjustments.
12. The explicit nature of the prophecy concerning **Sarah** is designed in part to confirm for **Abraham** his faith in the promised heir. Cp.Rom.4:19-20
13. This as it pertains to **Sarah** also possessing Ph₂ +V qualifying her in tandem with **Abraham** as to the blessings of descendants.
14. In other words, **Abraham** now believes that he and **Sarah** will bear offspring apart from any other disqualification possibly found in the relationship.
15. **God** assures him that Sarah’s +V guarantees the blessing.
16. Though previous mention of **Sarai** has been omitted, that too is no reflection of a diminished faith (less than +V).
17. The divine silence regarding **Sarah** never caused her to lose faith in the covenant promises.
18. She remained positive and acted the part of the good **wife** all those years, suffering infertility and hearing nothing from Yahweh about her place in the plan.
19. In chapter 16 we saw that she supposed that surrogate motherhood was the answer.
20. Yet, even in her failure, her desire and intentions were to see the covenant promises fulfilled (cp.16:2).
21. That scheme was turned into blessing for **Abraham** (cf.vs.5c) and did not ultimately stymie **Sarah** finishing her course.
22. Still, nothing has been said about **Sarah** as it might directly pertain to a part in the covenant other than mere mention in Gen.11:30 acknowledged by her in 16:2.
23. Sarah’s promises have parallels with vss.4-6 (e.g., **nations and kings**).
24. There the narrative prepared us for the momentous significance of the **name** change; here it is sprung without explanation.
25. The name **Sarah** is just an alternative pronunciation of Sarai; they both mean “princess”.
26. However, the former carried the idea of “contentious” and the emphasis now is that she represents royalty producing royal offspring (**kings**).
27. She shares in the destiny of **Abraham** in this way also elevating her spiritual status to maturity.
28. Her spiritual advance to this goal thus qualified her as a candidate for double blessing as noted in vs.16 in the twice used phrase “**and/then I will bless her**”.
29. The blessing in vs.16a grammatically puts **Sarah** as the object of blessing defined by the sign of the direct object with the pronominal suffix “**her**” in the Hebrew (‘othah).

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30. The grammar targets (associates) **Sarah** directly with **Abraham** in time as to being qualified for blessing (MAJG).
31. The first blessing is that **God** “**will give you a son by her**/nathan min lamed ben”.
32. **Sarah** is to be in the line of Christ producing the promised seed.
33. In 15:3, **Abraham** complained, “*you have given me no seed...*”.
34. Now it is explicitly confirmed that there is to be a son for him from **Sarah**.
35. Sarah’s and Abraham’s +V in tandem qualified them to be named the first married couple in the Bible in the line of Christ after Adam and Eve.
36. In vs.16b & c, the Hebrew attaches the pronoun “**her**” directly to the verb “**blessed/barak**” looking to further blessing for **Sarah** as a result of her +V independently.
37. The double blessing looks to immediate and future blessings.
38. In the future, “**she will be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her**” (ref.pt.36 cp.vs.6 “*from you*” emphasizing Abraham’s person).
39. These promises directly correlate with vs.6.
40. So the future promises of **nations and kings** are not just through sexual procreation, but based on the spiritual lineage via the promised seed, Christ (see Analysis vss.4-8).
41. That interpretation is now supported with the phrase “**kings of peoples/melek –am**” that implies royalty apart from specific national identity.
42. **Sarah** along with her +V husband **Abraham** is to share in recognition for eternity because she too was +V.
43. She is an equal heir with her husband Ph₃. Cf.1Pet.3:7
44. She is the first woman to be mentioned in the Hebrew’s Hall of Fame. Heb.11:11
45. **Sarah** is elevated from a mere footnote to major prominence in the plan connected with this covenant.
46. This was her reward for faithfulness to the plan even though she was called upon to suffer anonymity of the first ~29 years of their sojourning.
47. The full significance of her deliverance from the Egyptian harem now makes complete sense.
48. Her +V placed her in the position of protection by **God** from any hindrance in His plan for her.
49. This woman endured in her role as helpmate.
50. She never lost faith in the covenant made with her husband. Cp.Heb.11:13
51. She would hold fast to the unrealized promises to the end of her life.

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ABRAHAM'S REACTION

EXEGESIS VERSES 17 – 18:

וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ ^{WTT} Genesis 17:17
 הַלְבֵן מֵאֵה־שָׁנָה יוֹלֵד וְאִם־שָׂרָה הַבְּתֻלָּה תֵּשֶׂה שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:17 **Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart,** (7

לֵב בִּ אִמֵּר ו צַחֵק ו פָּנָה עַל אַבְרָהָם נִפֹּל [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: naphal; "and he fell"; + proper n: "Abraham"; + prep: -al + n/com/b/pl/constr. w/3ms suff: panah; "upon his face"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: tsachaq; "and laughed"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + prep: bet + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: leb; "and said in his heart"])

"Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? (יֵלֵד שָׁנָה מֵאֵה בֵּן לְהִ) [interr.part: ha; "What?"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr: ben; "for a son of"; + adj/f/s/abs: me'ah; "a hundred"; + n/com/f/s/abs: shanah; "years"; + v/Niphal/IPF/3ms: yalad; "he will bear a child" {passive emphasizes the father's part of giving birth}]

And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (וְאִם שָׂרָה בַת הַשְּׁנָה תֵּשֶׂה יֵלֵד) [waw conj. + conj: 'im; "and since"; + proper n: "Sarah"; + interr.part: ha; "what?"; + n/com/f/s/constr: bath; "a daughter of"; + adj/b/pl/abs: tishe-iyim; "ninety"; + n/com/f/s/abs: shanah; "years"; + v/qal/IPF/3fs: yalad; "she will bear/give birth"])

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים לוֹ יִשְׁמְעָאֵל ^{WTT} Genesis 17:18
 יַחֲיָה לְפָנֶיךָ:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:18 **And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!"**

(וְאִם שָׂרָה בַת הַשְּׁנָה תֵּשֶׂה יֵלֵד) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + proper n: 'abraham + prep: 'el + d.a. + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohiyim; "and he said, Abraham, to God"; + part: lu; "would that/perhaps"; + proper n: "Ishmael"; + v/qal/IPF/3ms: chayah; "will live"; + prep: lamed + n/com/b/pl/constr. w/2ms suff: paneh; "before Your face!"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 17 – 18:

1. God's prophetic discourse concerning **Sarah** is abruptly interrupted.
2. The author breaks contextual flow to record Abraham's reaction specifically concerning the fact that he and **Sarah** are to have their own **child** (vs.16a).
3. This aside from the future blessings she was to enjoy (vs.16b) and even apart from the promises of offspring for his own person previously (vss.4-7).
4. To think they will have a **child** of their own evokes a humorous thought.

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5. His immediate response was to again prostrate himself (cf.vs3) and he “**fell on his face/naphal –al panah**”.
6. As with vs.3, it is a gesture of awe, gratitude and overt decorum showing a willingness to assimilate what God is saying.
7. Yet, something clicks in his mind that elicits a comedic thought and he “**laughed/tsachaq**”.
8. The phrase “**and said in his heart/waw ‘amar bet leb**” then indicates what was going through his mind in the moment.
9. The two actions are simultaneous yet separate and if he **laughed** out loud, it is unclear.
10. It is possible he assumed the prone position to cover any overt laughter seeking to avoid any disrespect towards **God** otherwise.
11. What struck his “funny bone” is then revealed in the remainder of vs.17, “**Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?**”
12. The Hebrew illustrates Abraham’s mindset with the interrogative particle “*ha*” best translated “**What?**” used two times syntactically addressing the ages of **Abraham and Sarah** respectively.
13. The particles expose his humor in observation of the promise.
14. The intent of the Hebrew is “**What? A man one hundred years old and his wife...what, ninety years old... they are going to have a child?**”
15. To hear such news from a human perspective would spark dubious wit from most normal people.
16. Interpreters are divided as to whether Abraham’s response shows doubt or simply amusing contemplation of a remarkable situation.
17. Rom.4:17-21 that deals with the immediate situation is key to unraveling the quandary:
 - A. The Roman’s passage appeals to our Genesis’ passage per the phrase “*about a hundred years old...*” (Rom.4:19b).
 - B. When **God** made this statement to **Abraham**, humanly the situation was hopeless.
 - C. In spite of this, **Abraham** believed **God** and brought the attribute of omnipotence to bear on the situation (Rom.4:17b).
 - D. That **God** is able to produce an heir from nothing is necessary (Rom.4:18).
 - E. *Hope against hope* pulls the believer in two opposite directions.
 - F. Against hope refers to the human assessment of the situation and the chances of an heir being born.
 - G. In hope refers to the assessment of faith based on the WOG and consideration of the person of **God**.
 - H. **Abraham** believed the incredible that at age 100 and **Sarah** at 90, with both sexually dead (Rom.4:19 cp.Heb.11:12), that they would parent nations.
 - I. That the promises of Gen.17 was made when **Abraham** was 99 years old (cf.Gen.17:1), his reference to him and **Sarah** of having the **child** a year later further implies believing a certain future fulfillment.
 - J. Even as he declined physically, he continued to believe the promise.
 - K. He did not, on the other hand, close his eyes to the realities of his niche, he considered them carefully.
 - L. Even as he considered these realities, he did not lose sight of the fact that **God** had promised him an heir (Rom.4:20).

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- M. His faith explicitly confirmed (Gen.17:16) remained unwavering, confident that **God** would provide (Rom.4:21).
18. Again, over the 13 years since operation Hagar, Abraham's faith grew and increased.
 19. By the time of the explicit promise of Gen.17:16a, what **Abraham** had previously doubted was overcome by faith.
 20. Any doubt implied by the questions is simply expressing the almost unbelievable (apart from faith) nature of the promise.
 21. His laughter and humorous thought is in contrast to Sarah's response in 18:12-15 that undisputedly and clearly expresses unbelief.
 22. Ironically, the verb "**laughed**/tsachaq" is the root for the name "Isaac/yitsechaq" (cp.vs.18).
 23. **Abraham** unwittingly acts out the name of his free born son by **Sarah**.
 24. Abraham's thoughts are not rebuked.
 25. In fact his plea in vs.18, "**Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!**" is treated with consideration.
 26. This also supports that **Abraham** is not responding in disbelief, but in orientation to the promise.
 27. Adopting the view that **Abraham** understands the promised heir is not **Ishmael**, his statement is one of desire for the love of his son and not suggesting that he be the heir.
 28. **Abraham** realized that the promise of an heir through **Sarah** would bypass **Ishmael** completely.
 29. His hope otherwise is that "*perhaps*/lu (expresses desire translated **Oh**)" there is a place for his slave son to be part of the covenant.
 30. Elohim makes clear that this will not be the case in vss.19ff.
 31. The above interpretation follows suit with Abraham's prostrating in our verses with vs.3 as evidence of inhale faith.

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GOD RESPONDS TO ABRAHAM'S REQUEST

EXEGESIS VERSES 19 – 22:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֲבַל שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ יֵלְדָת לְךָ ^{WTT} Genesis 17:19
 בֵּן וְקָרָאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִצְחָק וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתּוֹ לְבְרִית
 עוֹלָם לְזַרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:19 **But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son,** (אמר 7)

אֱלֹהִים אֲבַל שָׂרָה אִשְׁהָ בֵּן לַ יֵלֵד *[waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "But He said, God"; + adv: 'abal {root for mourn/lament, cf.Gen.27:41; 37:35; 50:10,11; as adverb an adversative; that which is contrarywise; regretably so, cf.Gen.42:21}; "No/Verily"; + proper n: "Sarah"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2ms suff: 'ishshah; "your wife"; + v/qal/ptc/f/s/abs: yalad; "the one bearing" + prep. w/2ms suff: lamed + n/com/m/s/abs: ben; "for you a son"]]*

and you shall call his name Isaac; (ו יצחק שם את קרא 7) *[waw consec. + v/qal/PF/2ms: qarah + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: shem; "and you will call his name"; + proper n: yitsechaq {lit. to laugh}; "Isaac"]]*

and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. (ו אחרי זרע ל עולם ברית ל את ברית את קום 7) *[waw consec. + v/Hiphil/PF/1cs: qum; "and I will cause to stand/establish"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: beriyth; "My covenant"; + prep. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "with him"; + prep: lamed + n/com/f/s/constr: beriyth + n/com/m/s/abs: -olam; "for a covenant everlasting"; + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: zera- + adv. w/3ms suff: 'acharey; "for his seed/descendants after him"]]*

וְלִישְׁמַעֲאֵל שָׁמַעְתִּיךָ הִנְהוּ בִּרְכָתִי אִתּוֹ ^{WTT} Genesis 17:20
 וְהַפְּרִיתִי אִתּוֹ וְהִרְבִּיתִי אִתּוֹ בְּמֵאֵד בְּמֵאֵד שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר נְשִׂאִים
 יוֹלִיד וְנָתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:20 **"And as for Ishmael, I have heard you;** (ו שמע ישמעאל ל 7) *[waw conj. + prep: lamed + proper n: yishema-e'l; "and as for Ishmael"; + v/qal/PF/1cs w/2ms suff: shama-; "I have heard you"]]*

behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly (הנה בראך הנה) *[interj.part: hinneh; "behold!"; + v/Piel/PF/1cs: barak; "I blessed"; + sign of d.o. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "him"; + waw consec. + v/Hiphil/PF/1cs: pharah; "and I will cause to bear fruit"; + sign of d.o. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "him"; + waw consec. + v/Hiphil/PF/1cs: rabah; "and I will cause to multiply"; + sign of*

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d.o. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "him"; + prep: bet + adv: me'od + adv: me'od; "in much abundance/exceedingly"])

He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. (שְׁנַיִם) שָׂרָה לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בְּשָׁנָה הַאֲחֵרֶת: [adj/m/dual/abs: shenayim "two"; + adj/m/s/abs: -asar; "ten" {twelve}; n/com/m/pl/abs: nasiy'; "princes/leaders"; + v/Hiphil/IPF/3ms: yalad; "he will bear"; + waw consec. + v/qal/PF/1cs w/3ms suff: nathan; "and I will give him/make him"; + n/com/m/s/abs: goy + adj/m/s/abs: gadol; "a nation, a great one"])

וְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֶקְיָם אִתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד לְךָ
שָׂרָה לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בְּשָׁנָה הַאֲחֵרֶת:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:21 "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, (אֵת קוֹם בְּרִית אֵת ו) יִצְחָק [waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: beriyth + v/Hiphil/IPF/1cs: qum + prep: 'eth + proper n: yitsechaq; "But My covenant I will cause to stand with Isaac"])

whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year." (הָ לְ שָׂרָה לְ יֶלֶד אֲשֶׁר) הָ לְ שָׂרָה לְ יֶלֶד אֲשֶׁר [rel.pro: 'asher + v/qal/IPF/3fs: yalad + prep. w/2ms suff: lamed + proper n: sarah; "whom she will bear to you, Sarah"; + prep: lamed + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: mo-ed; "at the appointed time"; + d.a. adj/m/s: zeh; "this one" {at this season} + prep: bet + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: shanah; "in the year"; + d.a. + adj/f/s/abs: 'acher; "the next one""])

וַיֵּלֶךְ אֵתוֹ וַיַּעַל אֱלֹהִים מֵעַל אַבְרָהָם:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:22 And when He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. (ו) אַבְרָהָם עָלָה מִן אֱלֹהִים עָלָה ו אֵת דְּבַר לְ כָלָה ו) [waw consec. + v/Piel/IPF/3ms: kalah; "and He finished/ceased"; + prep: lamed + v/Piel/inf/constr: dabar; "talking"; + prep. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "with him"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: -alah; "and He went up"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "God"; + prep: min + prep: -al; "away from"; + proper n: "Abraham""])

ANALYSIS VERSES 19 – 22:

1. God's initial response to Abraham's request concerning **Ishmael** is one of regret "No/abal".
2. The root of the Hebrew 'abal means to mourn or lament (cf.Gen.27:41; 37:35; 50:10,11) and as an adverb carries the sense of "to the contrary".
3. It has the idea of disappointment and in a bad sense of "remorse" such as in Gen.42:21 concerning the guilt of Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery.
4. The expression in our verse carries a sense of compassion towards Abraham regrettably declining the request as one might respond in a disappointing situation.
5. **God** then immediately reiterates that the **covenant** promise of heir will come through **Sarah**.

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6. In contrast to any lament Abraham might have of omitting **Ishmael** from the covenant, **God** then inserts a little levity to lighten his mood.
7. That in the fact that his **name** was to be “**Isaac**/yitsechaq” built on the Hebrew word “to laugh (*tsachaq*; vs.17).
8. This shows God’s sense of humor and the irony is a reminder as to the magnitude of blessing that is associated with the promised heir.
9. He is to draw encouragement from the doctrinal promises of actual blessing rather than dwell on what might or could be.
10. It is through the line of **Isaac** that the **covenant** of Abraham’s offspring is to endure for eternity (vs.19c).
11. The exclusion of **Ishmael** from the Abrahamic **Covenant** is then spelled out in vs.20.
12. The phrase “**I have heard you**/shama-“ is a play on Ishmael’s name (cp.16:11).
13. **Ishmael** is to be a recipient for blessing of not only 1 positive parent (mother), but 2 (father).
14. He is **blessed** by association with Abraham as recognized in the Hebrew grammar of using the sign of the direct object with the 3rd person suffix “**him**” following the 3 verbs “**ble**ss, **ma**ke fruitful and **mu**ltiply” (not unlike the use of the d.o. with Sarah’s blessing in vs.16a).
15. As a son of Abraham, he is to enjoy multiplication of his descendants “**exceedingly**/me’od me’od”.
16. Furthermore, **God** tells Abraham that **Ishmael will father twelve princes** or tribal leaders and he will sire a **great nation** (the Arab constituent).
17. Later of course, Jacob would **father 12 princes** or tribal leaders.
18. Israel was divided into 12 tribes headed by “**princes/nasiy**” (cf.Num.7), but here the divine promise looks forward to **Ishmael** producing 12 tribes (cp.Gen.25:13-16).
19. **Ishmael** is to find this favor in spite of the fact that he is to be a wild-ass of a man and rebellious (cf.16:12).
20. He points to the reality that blessing spills out upon others due to association with +V.
21. As great as the blessing for **Ishmael**, the fact remains that any mention of the blessing being “**everlasting**/-olam” is omitted (in contrast to Israel).
22. However splendid the prospect is for **Ishmael**, the **covenant** is to remain with **Isaac**, who is to be born in just a year’s time (vs.21b).
23. For 29 years the promise of offspring has been dangled before Abraham, but nothing ever seemed to happen.
24. He expressed his despair to **God** and now suddenly he is assured that in only one year’s time his elderly barren wife will give birth.
25. The promise of imminent birth raises the tension of the narrative and injects a feeling of suspense and drama into it.
26. God’s promises in this chapter are breathtaking in their scope when fully understood.
27. **God** then makes a dramatic exit in vs.22
28. Usually nothing is said about **God** ceasing to speak or going away; He just stops and the narrative moves on to the next event.
29. It in part pictures that Bible class is over and now inhale faith (intake of BD) waits to be expressed in exhale faith (application of BD).

ABRAHAM’S OBEDIENCE

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EXEGESIS VERSES 23 – 27:

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ וְאֵת
 כָּל־יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל־מִקְנֵת כֶּסֶפּוֹ כָּל־זָכָר בְּאֲנָשֵׁי בֵית
 אַבְרָהָם וַיִּמַּל אֶת־בָּשָׂר עֶרְלָתָם בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כַּאֲשֶׁר
 דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהִים:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:23 Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house (וַיִּקַּח אֶת אַבְרָהָם לְקַח ו) [*waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: laqach + proper n: 'abraham; "and he took, Abraham"; + sign of d.o. + proper n: "Ishmael"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: ben; "his son"; + waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + adj/m/pl/constr: yaliyd; "and all those born of"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: bayith; "his house"]*)

and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, (וְאֵת כָּל מִקְנֵה כֶּסֶף אִישׁ בְּבֵית אִישׁ בְּזָכָר כָּל כֶּסֶף מִקְנֵה כָּל אִישׁ ו) [*waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/f/s/constr: miqenah; "and every one purchased with"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: keseph; "his silver/money"; + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/m/s/abs: zakar; "every male"; + prep: bet + n/com/m/pl/constr: 'ish + n/com/m/s/constr: bayith; "among the men of the house of"; + proper n: "Abraham"]*)

and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him. (וַיִּמַּל אֱלֹהִים אֶת דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר כָּזָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בְּשָׂר אֶת מוֹל [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: mul; "and circumcised"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: basar; "the flesh of"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3mpl suff: -arelah; "their foreskin"; + prep: bet + n/com/f/s/constr: -etsem {lit. bone} "on the same"; + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: yom + d.a. + adj/m/s: zeh; "day, the very one"; + prep: kaph + rel.pro: 'asher + v/Piel/PF/3ms: dabar; "just as which He utterly spoke"; + prep. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "with him"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'elohim; "God"])

וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־תְּשַׁעִּים וְתֵשַׁע שָׁנָה בְּהַמְלוֹ בְּשָׂר
 עֶרְלָתוֹ:

^{NAS} Genesis 17:24 Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. (וְאֵת אַבְרָהָם בֶּן אַבְרָהָם ו) [*waw conj. + proper n: "and Abraham"; + n/com/m/s/constr: ben + adj/both/pl/abs: tise-iyim; "a son of ninety"; + waw conj. + adj/f/s/abs: tesa-; "and nine"; + n/com/f/s/abs: shanah; "years"; + prep: bet + v/Niph'al/inf/constr. w/3ms suff: mul; "in his having been circumcised"; + n/com/m/s/constr: basar + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: -arelah; "in the flesh of his foreskin"]*)

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וַיְשַׁמְעֵאל בְּנוֹ בֶן־שָׁלֹשׁ עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה בְּהַמּוֹלֹ
אֶת בְּשָׂר עֶרְלָתוֹ: ^{WTT} Genesis 17:25

^{NAS} Genesis 17:25 **And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.** (וַיְשַׁמְעֵאל בֶּן בֶּן־שָׁלֹשׁ עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה בְּהַמּוֹלֹ אֶת בְּשָׂר עֶרְלָתוֹ [waw conj. + proper n: "and Ishmael"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: ben; "his son"; + n/com/m/s/constr: ben; "a son of"; + adj/f/s/constr: shalosh; "three"; + adj/f/s/abs: -esereh; "ten"; + nc/om/f/s/abs: "shannah; "years"; + prep: bet + v/Niphal/inf/constr. w/3ms suff: mul; "in his having been circumcised"; + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: basar + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: -arelah; "in the flesh of his foreskin"])

בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִמּוֹל אַבְרָהָם וַיְשַׁמְעֵאל
בְּנוֹ: ^{WTT} Genesis 17:26

^{NAS} Genesis 17:26 **In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son.** (בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הָיָה אַבְרָהָם וַיְשַׁמְעֵאל בֶּן [prep: bet + n/com/f/s/constr: -etsem + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: yom + d.a. + adj/m/s: zeh; "on the same day, the very one"; + v/Niphal/PF/3ms: mul; "he had been circumcised"; + proper n: "Abraham"; + waw conj. + proper n: "and Ishmael"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: ben; "his son"])

וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּיתוֹ יֻלְּדוּ בְּיַת וּמִקְנַת־כֶּסֶף
מֵאֵת בֶּן־נֶכֶר נִמּוֹלוּ אִתּוֹ: פ ^{WTT} Genesis 17:27

^{NAS} Genesis 17:27 **And all the men of his household,** (וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּיתוֹ [waw conj. + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/m/pl/constr: 'ish + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: bayith; "and all the men of his household"])

who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, (וּ בְּיַת יֻלְּדוּ [adj/m/s/constr: yaliyd; "those born of"; + n/com/m/s/abs: bayith; "the house"; + waw conj. + n/com/f/s/constr: miqenah; "and acquired/bought with"; + n/com/m/s/abs: keseph; "money"; + prep: min + prep: 'eth; "from along with"; + n/com/m/s/constr: ben + n/com/m/s/abs: nakar; "the son of a foreigner"])

were circumcised with him. (פ אִתּוֹ מוֹל [v/Niphal/PF/3cpl: mul; "were all circumcised"; + prep. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "with him"; end of chptr. Phe])

ANALYSIS VERSES 23 – 27:

1. Vs.23 opens the 2nd scene of the chapter in epilogue.

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2. It is terse in its narration.
3. Just as quickly God exited the scene in vs.22, so **Abraham** is seen promptly applying the rite of circumcision “**in the very same day**/bet –etsem ha yom ha zeh” used 2x, vss.23,26.
4. His quick actions not only evidence his Ph₂ obedience, but conveys a sense of urgency tied to God’s final words before departure, “*this season next year*” (vs.21).
5. The listing of all those **circumcised** carefully echoes vs.12 to insist that Abraham’s obedience was not only prompt, it was exact.
6. The phrase “**as God had said to him**” is more accurately in the Hebrew, “*the like of which God had spoke to him*/kaph ‘asher dabar ‘eth ‘elohim” showing **Abraham** followed the details of every *word (dabar/spoke)*.
7. **Abraham** clearly understood that **God** is an exacting **God** (cp.Luk.19:21,22).
8. So all the males of Abraham’s **household** that were his in family or purchase were **circumcised** immediately following the theophany.
9. This included **Abraham** who was 99 **years old** as well as **Ishmael** who was 13.
10. Paul uses the chronology of Abraham’s circumcision as apologetic to the Judaizers that circumcision is ritual, not reality to salvation (Rom.4:9-12).
11. Any significance to Ishmael’s age other than the time elapse between chapters 16 and 17 is up for question.
12. What catches our attention is the two-fold reference to Ishmael’s circumcision in vss.25,26.
13. One might conclude that **Ishmael** was a believer accepted into the fold spiritually of the Abrahamic **covenant** along with the rest of the **household**.
14. This gives climax to the principle of blessing by association that underwrites chapter 17.
15. That blessing by association is at least again inferred is seen in the closing general statement that **all men of his household** “**were circumcised with him** (Abraham)/mul ‘eth” (vs.27).
16. However, it must be recognized that the primary emphasis of the epilogue is Abraham’s obedience performing a ritual that may or may not signify reality.
17. At the least, it infers that the gospel of circumcision was presented in Abraham’s **household** and **Ishmael** at age 13 had achieved God consciousness in consideration.
18. The charter promises are enormous for Israel for time and eternity in their scope.
19. For the individual to enjoy the full measure of these promises the reality behind the ritual must be in compliance.
20. Though Abraham’s thoughts are left unrecorded, his deeds are not.
21. His prompt and total obedience to the divine injunction was not put off for even a **day**.
22. The bombshell of the Divine speech is the promise that **Abraham** would father a son through his 90 year old wife in the coming year giving **Abraham** cause for levity and confirmation of faith.
23. In spite of previous doubts, he pursued spiritual advance and is rewarded with news of imminent blessing almost beyond belief.
24. The insight to the patriarchs feelings and thoughts allows us to identify with the ups and down of the believer’s experience on the glory road.
25. **God** was patient with his servant knowing he would turn away from doubt and embrace fully the promise of his heir.
26. *Review the Doctrine of Circumcision.*