

Set Apart for God

Genesis 17:1-27

“THE BLEAKNESS OF ABRAM AND SARAI’S SHORTCUT attempt to obtain an heir through Hagar is meant to provide the spiritual background for the story of covenant renewal. The interconnectedness of the two accounts is clear because the final verse of chapter 16 indicates that ‘Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram,’ whereas the opening verse of chapter 17 emphasizes that he ‘was ninety-nine years old’ when the Lord appeared to him. Moses intends that the reader understand that for some thirteen years now a cloud of domestic gloom and growing darkness about the promise had hung over the tents of Abram...

Chapter 17 is about how God came to Abram and elevated his faith by continuing the promise with the covenant of circumcision, which was then sealed by Abram’s obedience. Abram’s covenant faith and obedience were encouraged by God’s revelation of four new names: ‘God Almighty’ (v.1), ‘Abraham’ (v. 5), ‘Sarah’ (v. 15), and ‘Isaac’ (v.19).” Kent Hughes

I. The covenant God made with Abram was unilateral and unconditional, meaning that God Almighty obligated himself to Abram and his offspring to make them into a great nation. Even though the covenant was one-way and unconditional, God still expected Abram to be fully committed to living well before Him. God says “I will” seven times to show His commitment to Abram and the nation of Israel. In turn, He says to Abram, “you must” respond in ways that show you are committed to me and my righteousness. When 'El Shadday sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins, He said, “I will” save anyone who puts their trust in my Son for the forgiveness of their sins. In turn, He says to believers, “you must” respond in ways that show you take your salvation seriously through a life committed to me and my righteousness (Rom. 12:1-2).

Genesis 17:1-8

Rom 11:33-36

Rom. 4:19-21

'El Shadday,' "God Almighty" 'abrām,' "exalted father" 'abrāhām, "father of a multitude" or "chief of multitude"

“If we are not living for God, we prove by our actions that we have never been regenerated or justified. If we do, there is a certain sense in which we add our seal to the seal of God and acknowledge his world is truth.” Boice

1 John 2:9 *If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*

II. God's covenantal obligations show a serious commitment on the part of God to bless and honor those who are willing to accept the terms of his covenant. He expects those who enter into His covenant to consecrate themselves to Him with a very personal and lasting commitment to His Lordship over their lives. Through circumcision, God was setting apart a people unique to Him. It was a sign of serious commitment on their part and a sign of loving and gracious ownership on God's part. He wanted them to be unique to the world and unique to Him. As believers who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, our uniqueness sets us apart in ways that should not only show His grace through the power of the gospel but also our distinction from the world and its ways.

1 John 17:9-14
Col. 2:6, 9-12

Eph. 1:13-14 *13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

III. The blessings of being in a covenant relationship with God, and the blessings that flow from a life consecrated to him, will inevitably spill over, and bless those whom we love and know. Abraham's faithfulness to God and his righteousness was honored by God in ways that had a lasting impact on the one's he loved. His wife finally realized the unspeakable joy of bearing a son, which would not have happened if Abraham had not been the man of faith that he was. She, no doubt, grew in appreciation for the godly man she had married, but also in her understanding of who God is, a loving, gracious, and merciful God who in all things works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Gen. 17:15-22
Rom. 8:28

הַרְשָׁה *Sârâh*, "noblewoman"

יִשְׁחָק *Issac*, "he laughs"