

# Making Promises

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## Part 1: The Patriarchs

### Review

- God promises to make Abram the father of a great nation, but Abram remains childless. Abram's belief in the promises of God are immediately put to the test. The land he's promised undergoes a famine, then he lies to Pharaoh to save his own life, then he has arranged for his heir to be an adopted slave-son – Eliezer of Damascus.
- We continually seeing God fulfill his end of the promises, by preserving Abram's life, and blessing those that are with him.
- Abram considers God's promise trustworthy, and God considered him righteous on the basis of his faith.
- The Lord offers to Abram a sign of his obligation to the covenant that he is offering to Abram by splitting the animals in half, and passing between the animals.

### Abram and Hagar

- The narrative of Sarai's plan to supply Abram a human offspring through her Egyptian servant Hagar is surely intentionally placed. Immediately after God promises to give Abram an offspring "from [his] own loins," Sarai supplies a **human solution** to this conundrum.
  - It is probable that this narrative is meant to parallel the story of **Adam and Eve**.
  - Adam is punished by God for **listening to his wife**. (**Gen. 3:17**: Lit. "you listened to the voice of your wife..."), and Abram "listened to the voice of Sarai" (**Gen. 16:2**).
  - Eve took the fruit and **gave to her husband** who was with her (**Gen. 3:6**). "Sarai...took...her servant, and gave her to Abram (**Gen. 16:3**)."
  - Thematically, both Sarai and Eve are supplementing the plans of God with **human wisdom**.
  - Similar to Adam and Eve, Sarai **shifts the blame** and Abram **shrugs off responsibility**. Abram has neglected to take the proper command of the situation from the beginning, but instead, listened to the voice of his wife.
- In spite of Abram's twisted logic, God promises **to bless Ishmael and his line**.

- Hagar escapes toward Egypt when **the angel of the Lord** finds her and offers her a similar blessing as is given to Abram (**Gen 16:10**). He will later reaffirm this promise (**Gen. 17:20**) and then we will see it beginning to be fulfilled (**Gen. 25:13-16**).
- The annunciation and career of Hagar also foreshadows **Israel's Exodus (Deut. 26:6-7)**, **flight to the wilderness (Ex. 14:3, 5)**, and an **encounter with the angel of the Lord (Ex. 14:19; 32:34)**. If the compassionate God answered Hagar's cry, how much more Israel's?

## Circumcision and A Name Change

- Abram is already a father by his own wisdom, but now the promise is for a multitude of nations. God changes his name to Abraham, meaning, "**Father of a multitude.**"
  - Following Abraham's name change and reiteration of the covenant, Abraham is given **circumcision** as the part of the covenant he must follow.
- Sarai's name is also changed to Sarah which means "**Princess.**" She is told that kings of people shall come from her.
  - Following the covenant promise made to Sarah and the name change, Abraham carries out the sign of circumcision on **himself and his whole household**.
- Circumcision was to be an **expression of faith** that God's promises would be realized. As a sign of the Jew's commitment to YHWH, and YHWH's covenant commitment to him, a permanent reminder of God's covenant promises was placed on his body and the bodies of his male descendants (**Gen. 17:11**).
  - God is applying the sign of the covenant to the **reproductive organ**, and all those who are descendants of Abraham, before they consummate a marriage to a woman, will be reminded of the covenant in which they have been included by being children of Abraham.
  - Circumcision as a covenant sign was so important, that failure to participate in it would result in **excommunication from the family (Gen. 17:14)**.
  - Circumcision was a sign of the covenant faith that Abraham demonstrated in the promises of God, and early on the importance of circumcision was not merely of the foreskin, but **of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6)**.

## Making Promises: Patriarchs pt. 4

<b>Genesis 3:17</b>	And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
<b>Genesis 16:2</b>	And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.
<b>Genesis 3:6</b>	So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.
<b>Genesis 16:3</b>	So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.
<b>Genesis 16:10</b>	The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."
<b>Genesis 17:20</b>	As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.
<b>Genesis 25:13-16</b>	<b>13</b> These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, <b>14</b> Mishma, Dumah, Massa, <b>15</b> Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. <b>16</b> These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes.
<b>Deuteronomy 26:6-7</b>	<b>6</b> And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. <b>7</b> Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.
<b>Exodus 14:3</b>	For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.'
<b>Exodus 14:5</b>	When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"
<b>Exodus 14:19</b>	Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them,
<b>Exodus 32:34</b>	But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them."
<b>Genesis 17:11</b>	You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.
<b>Genesis 17:14</b>	Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."
<b>Deuteronomy 10:16</b>	Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.
<b>Deuteronomy 30:6</b>	And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.