

• LESSON 11 (March 15) • Genesis 17:1-18:21 •

The Beginning of the Sign of Circumcision

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” (Gen 17:1-8)

- ❖ When the LORD reveals himself to Abram as “God Almighty,” what does he mean?
- ❖ What did the name *Abram* mean? And *Abraham*?
- ❖ In your own words, what is the LORD promising Abraham?
- ❖ According to Genesis 17:9-14, what was the sign of the covenant God Almighty was making with Abraham and his offspring?

And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. 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. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.” (Gen 17:15-21)

- ❖ What did the name *Sarai* mean? And *Sarah*?
- ❖ What is God making abundantly clear to Abraham about the future of Ishmael, Isaac, and this “everlasting covenant”?
- ❖ What do we learn about Abraham in Genesis 17:22-27?

Take the time to carefully read Genesis 18:1-21.

- ❖ What is absolutely extraordinary about this scene?
- ❖ “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” Why was that question Abraham and Sarah needed to hear? Is that still a question we need to hear and grapple with, even today? If so, in what way?
- ❖ What does the LORD have in mind for Abraham and his offspring according to Genesis 18:17-19? How was this a direct contrast to the “outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah”? If you were a descendant of Abraham in ancient times, what impact should this statement of the LORD have had on you?