



Lesson 11

THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

Story Elements

- **TEXT:** Gen. 16:1-17:22
- **Setting:** circa 1900 B.C. in Canaan
- **Characters:** God, Abram, Sarai, & Hagar
- **Plot:** Abram has a child with Hagar, but God tells him that the promised child will come through Sarai.
- **Key words:** “my _____” (vv 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 21)
- **Climax:** *Genesis 17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.*

The Handmaid's Son

- 1) (16:1-3) After 10 years of living in Canaan, Sarai became impatient for the birth of the promised child – and her impatience led her to her own devices. According to ancient societal custom, Sarai encouraged Abram to take her servant girl _____ as a secondary wife.
- 2) (16:4-6) Hagar conceived a child with Abram, and she used her pregnancy as a means of _____ her barren mistress. Domestic troubles erupted, and Hagar fled from Sarai (and Abram) into the desert of Shur.
- 3) (16:7-12) When Hagar stopped by a spring of water, an angel of the LORD appeared unto her and told her...
 - a) ...that she should return to Sarai and _____ to her
 - b) ...that God would multiply her seed “_____”
 - c) ...that she would bear a son and name him _____ because God had heard her in her affliction. Regarding Ishmael:
 - i) He would grow to be a _____ man (literally, a wild donkey man – figurative of a free and untamable man).
 - ii) He would be a _____ man.
 - iii) He would live as a _____.
 - d) (16:13-14) Hagar called the LORD, “Thou God Seest Me” and poetically asked, “Have I seen the God that sees me?” In tribute to the LORD that had seen her in her affliction, she named the spring Beer-lahai-roi, which means “the well of the _____ one who sees me.”
 - e) (16:15-16) Hagar returned to Abram and Sarai and gave birth to Ishmael. Abram was _____ at this time. Sixteen years had passed since Abram was first called, and eleven years had passed since his arrival in Canaan.

The Covenant Sign

- 4) (17:1) Another 13 years pass before the LORD appeared to Abram again (*cf* 17:24). He announced himself as “The Almighty God” and commanded Abram to “walk before me, and be thou _____,” meaning, be sincere and upright. God commands his people “to set God always before us, and to think, and speak, and act, in every thing, as those that are always under his eye.” (Matthew Henry)
- 5) In this appearance to Abram...
- a) ...God reiterated his promises: that Abram would have many _____, that they would dwell in Canaan, and that God would be there God. (17:2-8)
 - b) ...God emphasized his promises by changing Abram’s name to Abraham, which means “father of a _____.” (17:9-14)
 - c) ...God required _____ as a sign of the covenant. All males in Abraham’s household (including servants) were required to receive the sign. (17:9-14)
 - d) ...God also changed Sarai’s name to Sarah, which means “_____.” Just as God emphasized his promise of a many descendants by changing Abram’s name, he underscored the fact that the promised seed would come through Sarai by changing her name. (17:15)

The Promised Seed

- 6) (17:17) Abraham laughed, not out of _____ but out of delight (*cf.* Rom. 4:20).
- 7) (17:18-21) In warm paternal concern, Abraham blurted out a prayer for Ishmael. God graciously promised to bless Ishmael, but reinforced his covenant promise saying, “my covenant will I establish with _____, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”

Application

- 8) How appropriate that before God commanded circumcision he commanded Abraham to “walk before me, and be thou perfect.” Circumcision was never intended as a means to achieve holiness, but as a constant reminder of the need to be circumcised in _____, that is, to live holily before the LORD. (*cf.* Deu. 10:16)

Romans 2:29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Answer Key

Key word(s): “covenant” | 1. Hagar | 2. reviling | 3. a) submit; b) exceedingly; c) Ishmael; i) wild; ii) fighting; iii) nomad; d) living; e) 86 | 4. perfect | 5. a) descendants; b) multitude; c) circumcision; d) princess | 6. Disbelief | 7. Isaac | 8. heart