

Genesis 17:1-14 – Lesson 27

Covenant of Circumcision

1. 17:1-3

- a. “*ninety years and nine*” – as Ishmael enters manhood 13 years later
- b. First mention of Almighty God (El Shaddai), God is able (not Abram’s flesh)
- c. “*walk before me, and be thou perfect*” – Abram should be complete in God
- d. He is going to expand the covenant, if Abram is committed to it.
- e. Themes: covenant (13x), everlasting (4x), circumcision (11x)

2. 17:4-8

- a. There are 3 divisions in the chapter: “as for me”, “thou shalt keep”, “as for Sarai”
- b. God will: 1) multiplied seed, 2) be a God to you, 3) land as an everlasting possession
- c. “*father of many nations*” – Not just many children, or a great nation, but nations
- d. Rom 4:17 – Father of Israel, father of circumcision, and father of uncircumcision
- e. “*be a God unto thee*” – This is a promise of blessing – Lev 26:12 and Jer 31:33
- f. “*all the land of Canaan... everlasting*” – This would be good news to the circumcised.
 - i. “*everlasting*” used regarding the seed twice and the land (see Gen 13:15)
- g. Is this for the church? There are no nations in the church (Gal 2:28); the church has seats in heaven, not Canaan (Eph 2:6-7); males must be circumcised, but Gal 5:2

3. 17:9-14

- a. “*thou shalt keep*” – This is now something for Abraham to do, there wasn’t in Gen 15
- b. “*ever man child... circumcised*” – born, bought, or in part of your house.
- c. Why? It is a token, a seal, a reminder of the covenant and promised seed.
- d. Suddenly there is a separated seedline, a special house, flesh that mattered.
- e. An everlasting covenant God made about real circumcision that has consequences.
- f. “*cut off from his people*” – It was required – Deu 10:12-13, 16; Deu 30:6; Num 15:30
- g. Circumcision of the flesh is only good if their heart submits – Gen 17:1, Rom 2:25
- h. God would cutoff circumcised Israel, if they were uncircumcised in heart – Jer 9:25
- i. The law said it is not just outward, but inward circumcision – Rom 2:29, Acts 7:51

4. Our Circumcision

- a. Many think circumcision is still effectual, others think baptism replaces it
- b. When was the token given? Abram was already counted righteous - Rom 4:9-16
- c. God required it or be cut off – Gen 17:14, Paul says it doesn’t matter – Gal 5:6, 6:15
- d. We are strangers of the covenants, and our salvation is not by works – Eph 2:9-12
- e. We are circumcised without hands, in the body of sins being cut off – Col 2:11-12
- f. Read Gal 2:20 and Rom 6:6 to learn of our old man being dead (cut off) in Christ.
- g. We are the circumcision who have no confidence in the flesh – Phil 3:3
- h. We are not circumcised by Abraham’s covenant, or Moses’, or Israel’s new, but according to the mystery of Christ.
 - i. We receive blessings through Christ not circumcision or covenant promises.