

B. The Particulars of the Speaking (4-21)

Prodigy of the Covenant

-The Mother of the Child

Sarai = Meaning Unknown

Sarah = Princess

Appropriate name since she would be mother of "kings"

"I will give you a son by her" (16)

"Sarah your wife shall bear you a son" (19)

"Sarah shall bear to you" (21)

-The Promise of the Child

Gen 15:4 - God had earlier promised that the heir would indeed be Abraham's son.

Now he confirms that it will also be Sarah's son, instead of Hagar's son Ishmael (see Ch. 16)

-The Name for the Child

"You shall call his name Isaac"

Isaac = **Laughter**

*Abraham laughed for joy when God told him of the promised birth (17)

*Sarah laughed in unbelief when she was told about the promise of Isaac's birth (Gen 18:12-15)

*Sarah laughed for joy when Isaac was born (Gen 21:6)

This is the 3rd "As for" section in God's speech: (v.4) "As for Me" (v.9) "As for you"

15 And God said to Abraham, "**As for Sarai** your wife, you shall not call her name **Sarai**, but **Sarah** shall be her name.

16 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.**"

Compare to Gen 17:6 →
"kings shall come from you"

17 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?"

"Everlasting Covenant" →
See notes from vv. 7 & 8

19 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.

Gen 16:10 "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." **Promise made to Hagar**

20 **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**.

Gen 25:12-16

21 But I will establish **my covenant** with **Isaac**, whom **Sarah** shall bear to you at this time **next year**."

Gen 18:10

-The Laughter About the Child

*Many scholars believe that, unlike Sarah's laughter in **Gen 18:12-13**, Abraham's laughing was not mockery or doubt but was expressing both joy and surprise at this revelation.

*This suggests that his original faith expression in **Gen 15:6** was not based on a realization that Sarah would be the mother.

*Neither ch 12 nor 15 identify her as the one who would bear the child.

*Had that been the case, Abraham would likely have refused Hagar when Sarah suggested that he have a son with her (ch 16).

*Rom 4:19 "He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb."

-The Privileges for the Child

"I will establish my covenant with Isaac"

Prohibited from the Covenant

"Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" (18)

Abraham pleads for Ishmael who has been excluded from the covenant

God's answer is simple: "No"

Though he does say...

"I have blessed him...and I will make him into a great nation"

C. The Postlude to
the Speaking (22-27)

His Obedience was Prompt

"That very day" (23)

"That very day" (26)

-Psalm 119:60 "I hasten
and do not delay to keep
your commandments."

His Obedience was Complete

-Abraham, Ishmael, and
"all the men of his house"
were circumcised
(23, 26, 27)

-See command in
Gen 17:12-13

²²When he had finished talking with him, *God went up* from Abraham.

Gen 17:1 → the Lord
was with Abraham

²³Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, *every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh* of their foreskins *that very day*, as God had said to him.

²⁴Abraham was *ninety-nine years old* when *he was circumcised* in the flesh of his foreskin.

Compare with Gen 16:16

²⁵And Ishmael his son was *thirteen years old* when *he was circumcised* in the flesh of his foreskin.

²⁶*That very day* Abraham and his son Ishmael *were circumcised*.

²⁷And *all the men* of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, *were circumcised* with him.

As For

Genesis 17:4 (NIV84)

⁴ “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations.

Genesis 17:4 (NASB95)

⁴ “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you,
And you will be the father of a multitude of nations.

Genesis 17:4 (NRSV)

⁴ “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

Genesis 17:4 (KJV 1900)

⁴ As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Genesis 17:9 (ESV)

⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.

Promise of the Child

Genesis 15:4 (ESV)

⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”

Genesis 16 (ESV)

¹ Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵ And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!” ⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸ And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” She said, “I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.” ⁹ The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel of the LORD also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said to her,

“Behold, you are pregnant
and shall bear a son.

You shall call his name Ishmael,
because the LORD has listened to your affliction.

¹² He shall be a wild donkey of a man,
his hand against everyone
and everyone's hand against him,
and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

¹³ So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me." ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Kings of Peoples

Genesis 17:6 (ESV)

⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.

Abraham Laughed

Genesis 18:12–13 (ESV)

¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'

Faithlife Study Bible - 17:17 laughed The verb *tsachaq*, from which the name Isaac (*Yitschaq*) comes. Abraham's laughter—expressing both joy and surprise—suggests that his original faith expression in 15:6 was not based on a realization that Sarah would be the mother. Neither chaps. 12 nor 15 identify her as the one who would bear the child. Had that been the case, Abraham would likely have refused Hagar when Sarah suggested that he have a son with her (chap. 16).¹

JFB Commentary - 17. Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed—It was not the sneer of unbelief, but a smile of delight at the improbability of the event (Ro 4:20).²

Be Obedient - Three different occasions of laughter are associated with Isaac's birth: Abraham laughed for joy when he heard his wife would give birth to the promised son (Gen. 17:17); Sarah laughed in unbelief when she heard the news (18:9–15); and Sarah laughed for joy when the boy was born (21:6–7). The name Isaac means "he laughs."³

¹ Barry, J. D., Grigoni, M. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Ge 17:17). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

² Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Ge 17:17). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1991). *Be Obedient* (pp. 69–70). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary - 17:15–18. God announced that **Sarai** was to be called **Sarah**. This new name, though involving only a slight change and meaning “princess,” was fitting for one whose seed would produce **kings** (v. 16; cf. v. 6). Hearing this, **Abraham ... laughed** because it seemed incredible that a barren **90-year-old** woman could give birth to a **son**. Abraham had assumed that his descendants would come through **Ishmael**.⁴

Abraham – Father of the Jews - This laughter must not be construed as laughing in mockery of what God had said. If Abraham had done that, the response of God (which we will see in the next few verses) would have been far different than what it was. You do not laugh at God and get away with it! But Abraham’s laughter was not mockery; it was that of wonderment, of astonishment, of laughing for joy at learning that the impossible was going to be accomplished. We have all experienced such emotions and can identify with the feeling.⁵

Genesis 15:6 (ESV)

⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.

The Name for the Child

Genesis 18:12–15 (ESV)

¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?” ¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵ But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

Genesis 21:6 (ESV)

⁶ And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.”

Next Year

Genesis 18:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.

⁴ Ross, A. P. (1985). Genesis. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 58). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵ Butler, J. G. (1993). *Abraham: the father of the Jews* (Vol. Number Nine, p. 163). Clinton, IA: LBC Publications.

Prohibited from the Covenant

Genesis 16:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ The angel of the Lord also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.”

Genesis 25:12–16 (ESV)

¹² These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s servant, bore to Abraham. ¹³ 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, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes.

God Went Up

Genesis 17:1 (ESV)

¹ 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,

His Obedience Was Prompt

Psalm 119:60 (ESV)

⁶⁰ I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.

His Obedience Was Complete

Genesis 17:12–13 (ESV)

¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, ¹³ both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.

Age of Abraham / Ishmael

Genesis 16:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.