

Scripture Reading

Genesis 17:3–7 (NIV)

³Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

1) Another failure

Genesis 12:10–13 (NIV)

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. ¹¹ As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. ¹² When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.”

Genesis 16:1–6 (NIV)

¹ Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, “The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.” Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me.” ⁶ “Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

2) An everlasting covenant

Genesis 17:1–14 (NIV)

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. ² Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” ³

Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.” ⁹Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. ¹⁰This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

3) All nations blessed

Genesis 17:15–20 (NIV)

¹⁵God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” ¹⁷Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!” ¹⁹Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ²⁰And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.

4) A miracle child

Genesis 17:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?”

Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

John 3:3 (NIV)

³ Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

John 1:12–13 (NIV)

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.