

Part II: Divine Iteration of the Abrahamic Covenant, Rom 4:21; Gen 12:2; 15:1-5, 18; 17:1-5, 15-21; Abraham's Doubt, Sarah's Suggestion, & Ishmael's Birth

Romans 4:21 -And having been fully convinced that what He himself had promised He is able also to accomplish.

29. The doctrinal conclusion that Abraham reached is stated in verse 21. It is the result of the doctrinal rationales drawn from his recall of God's promise and confidence it was backed by divine integrity.
30. Briefly put, God is honor bound to honor His Word.
31. For Abraham, the integrity of God was more real to him than the hopeless and visible physical incapacity of sexual death.
32. The message to us is that when we are in a hopeless situation and powerless to do anything about it, then we are put in the same circumstance as Abraham: is the integrity of God more real to us than the circumstances we face?
33. If so, then you have, along with Abraham, become "fully convinced," the aorist passive participle of the verb:

πληροφορέω, plērophoreō - "having been fully convinced"

This verb is a compound of **πλήρης, plērēs**: full, and **φορέω, phoreō**: to carry. The idea is to bring to fullness or to fulfill. In the passive voice it means to be completely filled. Figuratively it means "to have complete certainty," "to be fully convinced," or "to possess total confidence."

aorist: Constativ; contemplates Abraham's application of faith-rest in its entirety. He has total confidence in the integrity of God to fulfill the promise given.

passive: Abraham receives this disposition of confidence from doctrine resident in his soul. There is no other source of truth and therefore no other source of absolute confidence apart from the Word of God.

participle: Circumstantial, refers to any person that makes the advance and then relies on doctrine to resolve issues in life.

34. What follows next tells us about what Abraham was fully convinced, the relative pronoun **ὅς, hos** plus the perfect middle indicative of the verb:

ἐπαγγέλλω, epangellō - "to promise": "that He Himself had promised"

perfect: Iterative, denotes a process that is completed at intervals rather than continuously. It is the tense of repeated action. Abraham was given the promise of an heir on more than one occasion so that over the course of these events doctrine was poured into his soul so that he became fully convinced of its fulfillment. Here are the intervals of that iterative process:

Genesis 12:2 - "[the Lord] will make you [Abram] a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing;

Genesis 15:1 - The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great."

v. 2 - Abram said, "O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer \el-i-ē-zer\ of Damascus?"

v. 3 - And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

NOTE: At this point Abraham does not have full confidence in the promise of God given in Genesis 12:2. Consequently, God gives the promise again at this second interval:

Genesis 15:4 -And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

Genesis 15:5 - And He took Abram outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to Abram, "So shall your descendents be [**See Romans 4:18**]."

The Lord then delivered a Real Estate Covenant to Abram, what theologians call, the Palestinian Covenant. The vast territory that Abram's descendants were promised is described in:

Genesis 15:18 -On that day the Lord made a covenant [**the Palestinian Covenant**] with Abram saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt [**the Nile**] as far as the great river, the river Euphrates [**in Iraq**]:

NOTE: At the beginning of this second interval in which the promise is repeated and the Palestinian Covenant is given, Abram still does not have confidence in the promise and consequently reveals in verses 2 and 3 that he does not trust God. This is confirmed in Genesis 16 when his wife Sarai, who is barren, suggests he cohabit with the housemaid, Hagar, which Abram proceeds to do resulting in the birth of Ishmael. The problem continues at the third interval recorded in Genesis 17.

Genesis 17:1 -When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and apply doctrine.

v. 2 - And I will give My unconditional covenant between Me and you [**the Abrahamic Covenant**], and I will multiply you exceedingly."

v. 3 - Abram fell on his face [**a grace salute to the Lord indicating grace orientation**], and God kept on talking to Abram, saying,

v. 4 - "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

v. 5 - "No longer shall your name be called Abram [**the father of high and windy places**], but your name shall be Abraham [**the father of many nations**]; for I have made you the father of many nations."

Abraham will eventually recall the promise in verse 5, and claim it as a reality greater than his sexual death. This is confirmed in:

Romans 4:17 -As it stands written [**in Genesis 17:5**], "I have decreed you the father of many nations." In the sight of God, Abraham believed the promise of God to give life and make alive the dead ones [**the genitalia of both Abraham and Sarah**] and designated their sexual organs which did not exist [**sexual death**] as existing [**now fertile**].

However, there is still some doubt left as the conversation between the Lord and Abraham continues in:

Genesis 17:15 - Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

v. 16 - “And I will bless her, and give you a son by her. I will bless her and she will be a mother of nations. Kings of peoples shall come from her.

v. 17 - Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed [קִּיֵּץ *sachaq*, translated into English as **Isaac: laughter**] and said from his *kardia*, “Shall a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

v. 18 - And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might be my heir blessed by You!”

v. 19 - And God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac [קִּיֵּץ: *yischaq: laughter*]; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting [עוֹלָם *‘olam*] covenant for his descendants after him.

Here God extends the covenant through Isaac and all his descendants after him. It decrees that the Messianic line will continue through Isaac and not thorough Ishmael. Further, it is said to be an everlasting contract. The word is עוֹלָם *‘olam*: a period of time extended into the far distant future, i.e., until the Virgin Birth and then forever in the resurrected Christ.

This sets up a situation that will bring the sons of Sarah and the sons of Hagar into brutal, bloody, and incessant conflict. Abraham wished that Ishmael might be blessed and so he is:

Genesis 17:20 - “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

Genesis 17:21 - “But My covenant [**the Messianic lineage**] I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”

It is because of Abraham’s doubt expressed in verses 17 and 18 that has resulted in open conflict between Light and darkness and it has endured from that moment down to the present hour: the warfare between the line of Isaac and the line of Ishmael.

The Lord dealt graciously with Ishmael since his illegitimate birth was not his fault. His birth however resulted in punishment to Abraham for allowing his wife to deceive him just as Ishah had deceived Adam.