

Genesis 17:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Analysis

And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be c... This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

Historical Context

The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How should this truth about Isaac Promised shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׂר אֶת	ימול	לֹא	אֲשֶׁר	צַדְקָה	וְעַשְׂרָה	לֹא
And the uncircumised	man child	whose	H3808	is not circumcised	H853	flesh
H6189	H2145	H834		H4135		H1320
עַרְלָתָה וְ	מְעַט יְבָשָׂה	בָּהּ וְאַ	הַשְׁפֵּשׁ וְנִכְרַתָּה	וְעַד	אֶת	
of his foreskin	shall be cut off	that soul	H1931	from his people	H853	
H6190	H3772	H5315		H5971		
בְּרִית :	הַפְּרָא:					
my covenant	he hath broken					
H1285	H6565					

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 12:19 (Parallel theme): Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.