Genesis 17

Genesis 17:1–27 **God Requires Circumcision as a Sign of the Covenant**

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God." (John 3:16–18). "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!" (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

Links to the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies of **Genesis** (**HTML**) (**PDF**).

What follows is a collection of the weekly lessons of Genesis (**HTML**) (**PDF**) interspersed with the complete word-by-word exegesis of this chapter from the Hebrew with most of the text from my original Genesis exegesis (**HTML**) (**PDF**) added in. Furthermore, the examination of this chapter has been expanded with additional commentary as well. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined. At some point in the future, I need to go back and edit this material and consider other source material as well.

One more thing: **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them.[1] However, if you ever doubt a translation of a phrase or a verse, these translation tables will tell you exactly where that translation came from.

This should be the most extensive examination of Gen. 17 available, where you will be able to see every word of the original text.

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vv.	15–16	**God Renames Sarai, as the Covenant will be Fulfilled Through Her**
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[1] This was done as a result of the complaints of a close friend, now face to face with the Lord, who said that I intermingled the Hebrew and the explanation so much that he did not like it. Therefore, all of the Hebrew exegesis is visually set apart and may be easily skipped over.

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v. 20 **God's 4 Answers to Prayer**
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v. 27 **Romans 4 Interlude**
v. 27 **The Abbreviated Doctrine of Sanctification**

Addendum **Genesis 17 as a chiasmos**
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Addendum **Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 17**
Addendum **Genesis 17 and the Suzerain Vassal Treaty**
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Chapter Outline		Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines
Forward	Doctrines Covered and Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded To
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Definition of Terms
Introduction	Text	Addendum
www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in Genesis

Doctrines Covered	Doctrines Alluded To		
God Almighty			Faith-rest
	Laws of Divine Establishment	Rebound	Tongues, The Gift of

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To			
Gen. 14	Gen. 19		

Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			

Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Definition of Terms	
1st Advent	The time period when Jesus was born and had His earthly ministry.
4th Stage of Discipline	This is when a foreign nation comes in and rule over the country which is under discipline. These stages of discipline were devised primarily for nation Israel, but there is some application to us today.

Definition of Terms	
5th Stage of National Discipline	This is the stage of discipline God brings upon Israel when the people are removed from the land and taken into slavery by some foreign power.
Age of Israel	This is the period of time in history where God works through believers in nation Israel. God also worked through the Abraham and those descended from him until nation Israel was established.
Chiasmos	A chiasmos organizes a passage, so that there is a parallel with the beginning of the chiasmos with the end of it; the second portion of the passage finds its match in the second to the last portion of the passage; etc.
Church Age	The period of time in history where God works through the body of believers, also known as the church.
Covenant Theology	This is the incorrect interpretation of Scripture that Israel failed so many times before God that God finally just gave up on them and transferred all of His promises over to the church. Many churches and denominations hold to this theology. The over-arching view opposed to this is **dispensationalism**.
Dispensationalism	The over-arching theological view that God has slightly different programs from one era to the next. All of His promises to Abraham and to Israel will be fulfilled, even though God has temporarily set the Jewish race aside as His representatives here on earth.
Edification complex	The Edification Complex of the Soul is an illustration developed and named by R. B. Thieme, Jr. It is a "building" which is constructed within the soul to illustrate spiritual growth and what sorts of things have been attained by a person who is spiritually mature.
Faith-rest	Faith-rest is placing your trust in God, in His Word, in His promises or in Bible doctrine, and you step back and allow God to keep His Word, or fulfill His promises, or vindicate the doctrine which is in your soul.
Laws of Divine Establishment	These are natural laws which apply to people and nations, which cause a nation to be preserved and a people to be perpetuated. These laws are designed for believers and unbelievers alike.
Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)	In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the **Doctrine of Rebound** (**HTML**) (**PDF**) (**WPD**).
Spiritual Life	The life that God expects for us to lead. An unbeliever cannot lead a spiritual life.
Supergrace; the Supergrace life	This is a term and doctrine, developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr., which indicates a stage of spiritual maturity that some believers attain. Essentially, this is our first stage of spiritual growth and it is based upon the words *greater grace* as found in James 4:6.

Some of these definitions are taken from
http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml
http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf
http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d
http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm
http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html
http://www.theopedia.com/

An Introduction to Genesis 17

Introduction: Chapter 17 takes place 13 years after Gen. 16. Abram raises Ishmael, his son by Hagar, his wife's personal slave girl. Abram becomes quite naturally fond of him. Sarai will continue to bear some animosity for him and his mother until he is removed from the household. Abram has experienced great spiritual growth during this period of time and will now be used by God in most marvelous ways throughout the next few chapters. God first asks for a demonstration of Abram's faith, an outward sign of his being regenerated. He is to cut off the foreskin of his penis, which represents the beginning of his new line, his spiritual seed, his line of the promise and the grace of God. As any man would tell you, at age 99,this represents a tremendous step of faith. The majority of this chapter is God making promises to Abraham and Abraham fulfilling God's mandates.

Gen. 17 is a pivotal chapter in the book of Genesis, if not the entire Old Testament. God has already come to Abram on 3 previous occasions and has made promises to him. However, Abram chose to sire a child by Hagar, his wife's Egyptian slave girl (this was his wife's idea), and God set Abram aside for 13 years. God did speak to Hagar during that time, but not to Abram. It is important to note that God was not going to nullify His promises to Abram nor did Abram fail so much that God was just going to cast him aside. God simply put Abram on the shelf, and He would get back to him in this chapter.

It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Genesis 17

Y^{e}howah God told Abram to come to this land of promise, and he eventually did, bringing his wife and his nephew. His cattle business was so successful, that he and Lot could not keep their inventory separated and accounted for, so they separated from each other. So now it was just Abram, his wife and a large compound of slaves and employees (there may have been as many as 600, as he gathered an army of at least 318 to rescue Lot).

God has come to Abram on several occasions under somewhat murky circumstances—was it a dream a trance; was he awake, did all of this occur while asleep? These meetings certainly took place, but their exact nature remains undefined (Gen. 15 provides us a good example of these meetings being undefined). We know that these meetings were not just a dream, as dreams tend to be difficult to recall for any length of time (apart from recurring dreams); and Abram clearly recalls the very words that God spoke to him.

However, in these meetings, God has made clear promises to Abram—God would multiply his seed like the sand of the sea or like the stars in the sky; and that He would make many nations of Abram. God would also give a very specific piece of land to Abram—the land where he now lived. Finally, God would bless those who blessed Abram and He would curse those who curse Abram (and his seed).

In Gen. 16, at the suggestion of his wife, Abram had relations with Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant, and they had a child. This resulted in no little hostility between Hagar and Sarai, to the point where a very pregnant Hagar ran away. However, God came to her—as the Angel of the Lord—and He told her to return to her mistress (presumably for her own protection and provision).

Gen. 17 takes place 13 years after the birth of Ishmael (Abram's son by Hagar). This chapter will begin with God coming to Abram and introducing Himself as *God Almighty*.

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Genesis 17	
Characters	**Commentary**
God, as ʾEl Shaddai	This is the first appearance of God Abram for 13 years. He speaks of Himself as being God Almighty or God All-Sufficient. He will make it clear that Abram's son will come through Sarai.
Abram/Abraham	Abram is the man to whom God has made these many promises. He is 99 in this chapter and God will promise him a son by Sarai, his wife. God also changes his name to Abraham, which means *father of many*.
Sarai/Sarah	Sarai is clearly brought into the plan of God and into the promises made by God to Abram, whereas, before, her part in God's promises was implied, but never stated outright. God changes her name from *Sarai* (*my prince*) to *Sarah* (*princess*).
Ishmael	Ishmael is Abram's son by Hagar. He is 13 years old in this chapter, and it is almost time for he and his mother to make it on their own. Abram will ask for God's promises to be fulfilled through Ishmael in this chapter, indicating a very close bond between this father and son.
The males in Abraham's household	All of the men in Abraham's compound will be circumcised.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

The Abrahamic Timeline for Genesis 17

Personally, I love charts, and this chart gives us a general idea as to what events happened when, with an emphasis upon Gen. 17.

This is taken from the **Abrahamic Timeline** (HTML) (PDF) and reduced in size for this chapter.

The Abbreviated Abrahamic Timeline				
Brent MacDonald	**Christian Shepherd (age of Abram)**	**Reese's Chronology Bible**	**Scripture**	**Event/Description**
2164 B.C.	0	1967 B.C.	Gen. 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43rd generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Brent MacDonald	Christian Shepherd (age of Abram)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1907 B.C. 1927 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 11:28, 31	Abram's family travel from Ur to Haran, although their original intention had been to go to the land of Canaan. Gen 11:28, 31 Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.
2089 B.C.	75	1892 B.C.	Gen. 12:1–4	Abraham leaves for Promised Land from Haran, after being so instructed by God. Gen 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.
		1891 B.C. 1889 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 13:5–13	Abram and Lot separate from one another.
			Gen. 13:14–17	God renews His covenant with Abram.
			Gen. 14:18–20	Abram's meeting with Melchizedek.
		1882 B.C.	Gen. 15:1–21	God's covenant with Abram is given in greater detail.
2079 B.C. (derived date)	85	1882 B.C. 1881 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 16:1–14	Sarah gives Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, to Abram in order to sire a son. Gen 16:3 So Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan 10 years.
2078 B.C.	86	1881 B.C.	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
2065 B.C. (derived date)	99	1868 B.C.	Gen. 17:1–8	God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout.
	99		Gen. 17:9–14	Circumcision is given as a sign of the covenant and of Abraham's faith in his covenant with God.

Brent MacDonald	Christian Shepherd (age of Abram)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
	99		Gen. 17:15–19	Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and Isaac, a future son, is promised the Abraham and Sarah. Gen 17:17 Abraham fell to the ground, laughed, and thought in his heart, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?"
	99		Gen. 17:20–22	Ishmael's destiny is foretold. Gen 17:21 But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year."
	99		Gen. 17:23–27	Abraham obeys God and circumcises himself and the men with him. Gen 17:24 Abraham was 99 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, and his son Ishmael was 13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Here is what to expect from Genesis 17:

A Synopsis of Genesis 17

God comes to Abram when he is 99 years old and calls for Abram to walk before Him and to be blameless. This takes place 13 years after Gen. 16. Gen. 17:1

Despite the fact that God appears to Abram in a different form, Abram knows Who He is, and falls down before Him. Gen. 17:3

God makes more promises to Abram related to the covenant which He has spoken of before; and God tells Abram that he will be the father of many nations. Then He changes his name to *Abraham* (which means, *father of many*). Gen. 17:2, 4–6

This covenant which God is making with Abram will be an eternal covenant and it will continue between God and Abram's descendants. God also reminds Abraham that this is a land covenant; and that God will give a great deal of land to him and to his descendants. Gen. 17:7–8

God tells Abraham that He will require Abraham to give an overt sign that he is signing onto this covenant; God asks Abraham to be circumcised, along with all of the males in his household. Gen. 17:9–11

In fact, all males in Abraham's line will be circumcised on the 8th day, whether born as slaves or as free. Those who refuse circumcision will be cut off from their people. Gen. 17:12–14

God changes the name of Sarai and promises that she will become the mother of many nations as well. What God said made it clear that Abraham and Sarah (her new name) would have descendants together. Gen. 17:15–16

A Synopsis of Genesis 17

The idea of having children caused Abraham to fall on his face laughing. In so many words, Abraham says that such a thing is impossible, given their relative ages, and then he calls for Ishmael to be the heir of Abraham. Gen. 17:17–18

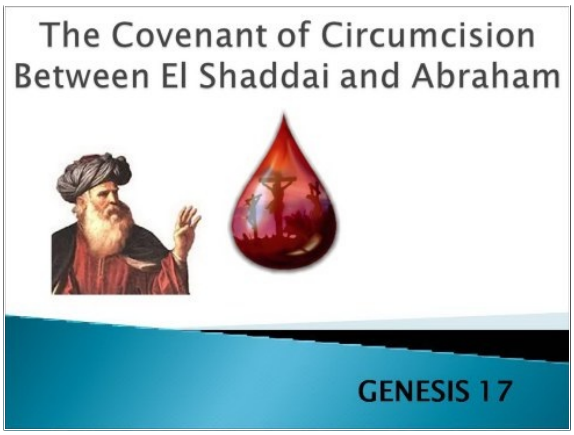
God makes it clear that Abraham and Sarah will have a child together, and that boy will be named Isaac. He would be the heir to all of the promises given to Abraham. God quickly adds that Ishmael is not forgotten; but that he will become the father of 12 rulers. Gen. 17:19–20

God reiterates that His covenant is with Isaac; and then God leaves Abraham by ascending. Gen. 17:21–22

Abraham obeys God and has everyone circumcised, including Ishmael and himself, along with every male in his household. Gen. 17:23–27

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines



Genesis 17 Graphic from The Last Days Calendar; accessed December 6, 2013

In this chapter, God will come to Abram, after 13 years of silence, and renew His covenant with Abram. God will also rename Abram and Sarai, his wife, and give them a date certain when their son will be born. However, what God will require is an act of faith on Abram's part. God will require Abram to circumcise himself and all of the males who are with him. That will be the sign that Abram has faith that what God has promised, God can and will bring to pass.

There is certainly more to circumcision than just that. Circumcision is not merely an act of obedience. Circumcision is a ritual which will represent rebirth, the new birth, the spiritual birth. Abram's sexual abilities will be revitalized—reborn, if you will—and through this rebirth, the Jewish race will be born. Such a revitalization represents a person being born again through faith in the Revealed God.

As an aside, you may think that we have spent too much time on each chapter. Quite frankly, when I began this project of a weekly Bible lesson (which has been inserted into the word-by-word exegesis of each chapter of Genesis), I never expected to spend 5–10 lessons on each chapter. I actually anticipated spending 5–10 pages on each chapter. However, Genesis is filled with great information. There is no book in the world like Genesis. Although the book of Genesis is principally narrative, it is filled with principles and doctrines and is the very foundation of all that we know to be true. Furthermore, there are times when individual words and phrases require no little investigation. Therefore, rather than focus on how fast we can get to Gen. 50, we should focus on the scenery and enjoy the drive along the way. It is why God recorded these words for us to study.

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Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God Speaks to Abram: Introduction to the Covenant

Slavishly literal:		Moderately literal:
And so is Abram a son of ninety year and nine years. And so is seen Y^{e}howah unto Abram and so He says unto him, "I [am] ʾEt Shaddai! Walk to My faces and be complete;...	Genesis 17:1	**When Abram was 99 years old, Y^{e}howah appeared to him [lit., *Abram*] and He said to him, "I [am] God Omnipotent! Walk before Me and be complete [spiritually mature];...**

When Abram was 99 years old, Jehovah appeared to him and said, "I am God Omnipotent. Walk before Me and be spiritually mature;...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation[2]; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou,* etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

[2] I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use **www.latinvulgate.com**.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. Taken from **http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/** and first published in 1862.

Targum of Onkelos	And Abram was the son of ninety and nine years, and the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am El Shadai; serve before Me and be perfect (shelim) in your flesh.
Latin Vulgate	And after he began to be ninety and nine years old, the Lord appeared to him: and said unto him: I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be perfect.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so is Abram a son of ninety year and nine years. And so is seen Y^{e}howah unto Abram and so He says unto him, "I [am] ʾEt Shaddai! Walk to My faces and be complete;...
Peshitta (Syriac)	WHEN Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, I am the Almighty God; walk well before me, and be faultless.
Septuagint (Greek)	When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am your God, be well-pleasing before Me, and be blameless.

Significant differences: When there are several wâw consecutive, it is reasonable to translate the first one *when*. The Hebrew way of saying that *Abram is 99* is rather convoluted, and therefore, reasonably shortened in the translation of that. The Greek lacks *Shaddai* and has the 2nd person pronoun instead. Both the Greek and Targum have different words than *walk*. The words used to translate *complete* are legitimate renderings of the Hebrew. The Targum adds *in your flesh*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	**God's covenant with Abraham** When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai [Or God Almighty or God of the Mountain] Walk with me and be trustworthy.
Contemporary English V.	Abram was ninety-nine years old when the LORD appeared to him again and said, "I am God All-Powerful. If you obey me and always do right,...
Easy English (Pocock)	**God changes Abram's name, 17:1-8** When Abram was 99 years old, the *Lord appeared in front of him. The *Lord said, `I am God who can do anything. Walk with me and do not *sin.
Easy-to-Read Version	When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him. The Lord said, "I am God All-Powerful [Literally, "El Shaddai."]. Do these things for me: Obey me and live the right way.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the Almighty God. Obey me and always do what is right.
The Message	When Abram was ninety-nine years old, GOD showed up and said to him, "I am The Strong God, live entirely before me, live to the hilt!
New Berkeley Version	When Abram was 99, the LORD appeared to Abram and told him: I am God Almighty; live in my presence and be upright.
New Century Version	**Proof of the Agreement** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty. Obey me and do what is right.
New Life Bible	**The Special Act Of The Agreement** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord came to him and said, "I am God All-powerful. Obey Me, and be without blame.
New Living Translation	**Abram Is Named Abraham**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am El-Shaddai-`God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible — Then, when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to him [again] and said: 'I am your God. So be pleasing to Me and don't do anything that you can be blamed for,...

Ancient Roots Translinear — Abram was a son of ninety nine years. Yahweh saw into Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty! Go in my face and be faultless.

Christian Community Bible — When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to him and said, “I am God Al mighty. Walk in my presence and be without blame!.

God’s Word™ — When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said to Abram, "I am God Almighty. Live in my presence with integrity.

NIRV — **The Covenant of Circumcision**
When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him. He said, "I am the Mighty God. Walk with me and live without any blame.

Today’s NIV — **The Covenant of Circumcision**
When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty [Hebrew El-Shaddai]; walk before me faithfully and be blameless.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English — When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord came to him, and said, I am God, Ruler of all; go in my ways and be upright in all things,...

Conservapedia — When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and told him, "I am Almighty God. Walk with me, and be spotless.

The Expanded Bible — **Proof of the Covenant**
When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am ·God Almighty [└El Shaddai]. ·Obey [└Walk before] me and ·do what is right [└be innocent/blameless; Job 1:1].

Ferrar-Fenton Bible — When Abram was ninety-six years old, the EVER-LIVING revealed again to Abram, and said to him, “I am GOD ALMIGHTY, walk before me and be perfect;...

HCSB — When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) — When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am El Shaddai [i.e., *God heeds*]. Walk in My ways and be blameless.

NET Bible® — **The Sign of the Covenant**
When Abram was 99 years old [Heb "the son of ninety-nine years."], the LORD appeared to him and said [Heb "appeared to Abram and said to him." The proper name has been replaced by the pronoun ("him") and the final phrase "to him" has been left untranslated for stylistic reasons.], "I am the sovereign God [tn The name ʾÊl (לְאֵ) [pronounced *ALE*]Shadday (יַדַשׁ) [pronounced *shahd-DAH-ee*] ('el shadday, "El Shaddai") has often been translated "God Almighty," primarily because Jerome translated it omnipotens ("all powerful") in the Latin Vulgate. This very lengthy footnote will be continued after the Hebrew exegesis]. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	When Avram was 99 years old ADONAI appeared to Avram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai [God Almighty]. Walk in my presence and be pure-hearted.
exeGeses companion Bible	And so be it, Abram is a son of ninety years and nine years and Yah Veh is seen by Abram and says to him, I am El Shadday; walk at my face and be integrious:
Kaplan Translation	*Circumcision* Abram was 99 years old [Thirteen years after Ishmael was born, in the year 2047. See Genesis 17:25. The vision did not come until Ishmael was legally an adult.]. God appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty [El Shaddai in Hebrew. Shaddai is interpreted as being the same as she-dai, 'He who has sufficient [power]' (Rashi).]. Walk before Me and be perfect [Tamim in Hebrew. The word can be translated as whole, unblemished, perfect, innocent, pious, or honest.]. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And when Avram was ninety and nine shanah, Hashem appeared to Avram, and said unto him, I am El Shaddai; walk before Me, and be thou tamim (blameless).
The Scriptures 1998	And it came to be when Abram was ninety-nine years old, that הוהי appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Ěl Shaddai – walk before Me and be perfect [Messiah gives the same command in Mt. 5:48.].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	WHEN ABRAM was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, I am the Almighty God; walk and live habitually before Me and be perfect (blameless, wholehearted, complete).
Concordant Literal Version	And coming is Abram to be ninety nine years of age. And appearing is Yahweh to Abram and is saying to him, "I am the El-Who-Suffices. Walk before Me and become flawless.
Context Group Version	And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, YHWH appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be whole {or fully-developed}.
Hebrew Names Version	When Avram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Avram, and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk before me, and be blameless.
Heritage Bible	And when Abram was a son of ninety-nine years, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am God, The Almighty; walk before my face, and be perfect..
NASB	**Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision** Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty [Heb El Shaddai]; Walk before Me, and be blameless [Lit *complete, perfect; or having integrity*].
Syndein/Thieme	And when Abram was ninety years old and nine {99 years old}, Jehovah/God appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I . . . {am} the Almighty {Shadday} 'El/God. Walk yourself {halak - reflexive Hithpa'el imperative - idiom for 'your way of life'} before My Presence/Face {paniym} {being in fellowship with God in time}, {and} 'be mature'/'grow up spiritually'/'demonstrate integrity' {tamiym - understanding and applying divine viewpoint to experiences in life}. {Note: At 99 years old, this is the peak of Abram helplessness.}
World English Bible	When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty. Walk before me, and be blameless.
Young’s Updated LT	And Abram is a son of ninety and nine years, and Jehovah appears unto Abram, and says unto him, “I am God Almighty, walk habitually before Me, and be you perfect;...

The gist of this verse: God appears to Abram again, when Abram is 99, and God tells Abram to walk before God and to be complete.

What we get from this first verse is, there was a **spiritual life** for the believer in the time of Abraham. We will examine that in depth in this chapter.

Genesis 17:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʾAb^{e}râm (אַבְרָם) [pronounced *ab^{v}-RAWM*]	*father of elevation, exalted father;* and is transliterated *Abram*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #87 BDB #4
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
tish^{e}ʿîym (תִּשְׁעִים) [pronounced *tish-ĢEEM*]	*ninety*	indeclinable noun; adjective; archaic plural	Strong's #8673 BDB #1077
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*]	*year*	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
têshaʿ (תֵּשַׁע) [pronounced *TAY-shahģ*]	*nine, ninth*	masculine singular noun; ordinal or cardinal numeral	Strong's #8672 BDB #1077
shânîym (שָׁנִים) [pronounced *shaw-NEEM*]	*years*	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040

Translation: When Abram was 99 years old,... The Bible, in the original language, was not broken down into chapters and verses. So the previous verse tells us that Abram is 86 years old. This verse tells us that he is 99; so, quite obviously, 13 years have elapsed since Gen. 16:16.

One of the reasons that Abram's age is mentioned here is, Abram is at the point where he can not longer sire children. Abram no longer has sex with Sarai. God has promised on 3 previous occasions that a great many people would come from him, like the stars of the sky (Gen. 15:5) and that they would occupy this huge piece of land (Gen. 15:18–21); and yet, it is clear to Abram that he is not going to have any more children. He is out of bullets and his gun no longer shoots. God wants this to be crystal clear that, He will make this happen. The descendants that come from Abram will be a matter of God's grace and God's power.

May I again suggest the **Abrahamic Timeline** (HTML) (PDF). In this timeline, the times during which Abraham speaks to God are denoted by a lavender background. Deaths and births are denoted with a

pale yellow background. This timeline allows you to step back and take in a fuller view of Abraham's recorded life; so that you can see the forest rather than the individual trees. What follows is a small portion of that timeline:

Genesis 15–17 in the Abrahamic Timeline

Brent MacDonald	Christian Shepherd (age of Abram)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1882 B.C.	Gen. 15:1–21	God's covenant with Abram is given in greater detail.
	85	1882 B.C. 1881 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 16:1–14	Sarah gives Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, to Abram in order to sire a son. Gen 16:3 So Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan 10 years.
2078 B.C.	86	1881 B.C.	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
	99	1868 B.C.	Gen. 17:1–8	God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be complete."

At the time of Gen. 17:1, Abram is 99 years old. 13 years have passed since the previous chapter, during which time, Hagar, Sarai's personal maid, has given birth to Abram's son Ishmael. Although nothing is said about who raised Ishmael, I think that we may reasonably conclude that he was raised by Hagar and Abram. As Sarai's personal maid, Hagar would take care of all the unpleasantries of raising a little male child, which would have increased their bond, and kept the child away from Sarai, both actually and emotionally. Furthermore, there was all of this drama between Sarai and Hagar; so when Hagar returned and gave birth to Ishmael, it is hard to imagine that Sarai would have gone out of her way to develop a bond with Ishmael. Her ill treatment of Hagar would have precluded such a bond. Therefore, what Sarai planned out in her mind—to use Hagar as a surrogate mother for her own child—things did not work out that way.

Application: God has designed a family structure to be based upon biology—one father + one mother + "x" number of children. Communal groups rarely continue as a mass of adults who do not pair up. They may believe in natural food, but they try to reject natural biology. Natural biology demands that, when a man and a woman have a child (and there is no other way), that there is a natural bond and natural connection there. A woman may find the children in her commune to be absolutely precious; but when it comes to the child from her own womb, that child, she will protect with her life.

Apparently, God has not appeared to Abram at all during these 13 years. Abram has been temporarily set aside, just as God would later set aside the people of Israel. Abram got off track. He tried to pursue a life which was in keeping with his culture, which pursuit went against God's plan. So God stepped out of Abram's life for 13 years. However, it is now time for God to begin to fulfill His promises that He made to Abram on 3 earlier occasions.

Abram is learning to wait on God. God has given specific promises to Abram, and God expects Abram to wait on Him for these promises to be fulfilled. God has made it clear what these promises were and that there are no

shortcuts, like using a surrogate mother in order to fulfil these promises. You cannot fulfill God's plan through the efforts of the flesh (that is, human good).

Ishmael, Abram's son by Hagar, is now 13 years old. God has made several promises to Abram—13 years ago and earlier—and has been speaking to Abram over these past 24 years, from time to time, but not lately. At this point in time, none of God's promises seem to make sense, as they are all dependent upon Abram having a son, and that appears to be less and less likely. 13 years ago, Abram was capable of fathering a son. In fact, the situation was becoming so dire that, his wife suggested that he impregnate her personal slave girl, because it appeared as though she was unable to have a child. As we have studied, Sarai probably wanted children herself, and this seemed the only way for it to happen. In any case, this tells us that, for awhile, Abram and his wife chose not to believe the promises of God, but to trust in their own human ingenuity. God had promised them that they would have a son and that Abram would be the father of many nations. If what God is saying is true, then there is no reason for Abram and Sarai to do anything other than to wait on God to fulfill His promises to Abram.

Now, 13 years have passed, Abram himself is no longer able to sire a child. Abram is 99 and sexually dead (Gen. 17:17 18:12 Rom. 4:17, 19). His wife has been infertile for at least the entirety of their marriage. This is the most apropos place to introduce God as the *All-Sufficient God*. God has several components to His character; He is Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Love, Perfection, Truth, etc. Here, He is presented as Omnipotent, or all-powerful; God with the ability to do anything, to accomplish anything. He is a God Whose strength and abilities transcend the laws of the universe, which universe He Himself created, which universe He holds together with the power of His Word, and which laws He predetermined. See the **Doctrine of God Almighty** (HTML) (PDF).

Genesis 17:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râʾâh (הָאָר) [pronounced *raw-AWH*]	*to be seen, to be visible; to let oneself be seen, to appear; to present oneself; to be provided [cared] for (i.e., looked after)*	3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
YHWH (הוהי) [pronunciation is possibly *yhoh-WAH*]	transliterated variously as *Jehovah, Yahweh, Yehowah*	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced *ehl*]	*unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to*	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾAbᵉrâm (מַרְבַא) [pronounced *abᵛ-RAWM*]	*father of elevation, exalted father;* and is transliterated *Abram*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #87 BDB #4

Translation: ...Yehowah appeared to him [lit., *Abram*]... The last time that God appeared to someone was 13 years ago, and it was to Hagar. Hagar had believed in the God of Abram; and, when she was running away from Abram and Sarai, she encountered God, Who told her to return home to her mistress.

It is most logical that much of what is recorded about Abram's life will be the instances where he spoke with God. That is, I don't believe that Abram had face to face dealings with God on a daily or weekly or even yearly basis. God appears to Abram perhaps a half-dozen times throughout his life. In recording the details of his life, it would

seem odd for Abram to leave out a meeting with God, and yet record some other event which would surely be seen as more trivial (any event ought to be seen as more trivial than God having direct contact with Abram). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that every time that God spoke to Abram (or to someone that Abram knew), that incident is recorded in the Word of God.

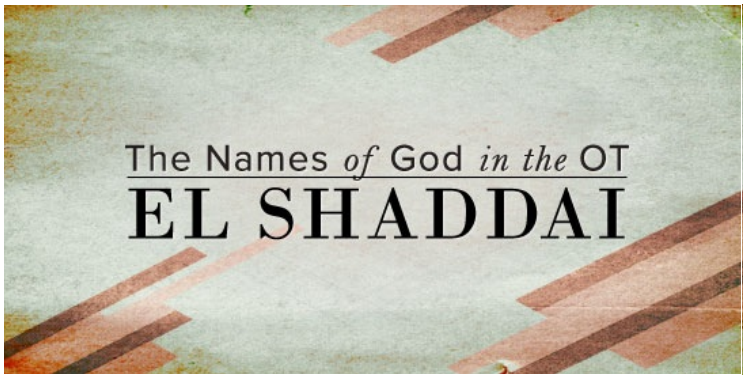
Genesis 17:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*]	*to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced *ehl*]	*unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to*	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced *aw-NEE*]	*I, me;* in answer to a question, it means *I am, it is I*	1st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
ʾÊl (אֵל) [pronounced *ALE*]	*God, god, mighty one, strong, hero;* transliterated *El*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #410 BDB #42
Shadday (שַׁדַּי) [pronounced *shahd-DAH-ee*]	*the many-breasted one;* and is generally translated *Almighty, the Almighty One; Omnipotent [One]*	proper noun	Strong's #7706 BDB #994

Together, these two nouns are often transliterated *ʾEl Shaddai*.

Translation: ...and He said to him, "I [am] God Omnipotent! There are several theories on the meaning of *Shaddai*. For most of Biblical history, it has been understood to mean *Almighty* and that suggests *Omnipotent*. There are some who claim that this means *the many-breasted one,* which is a reference to His all-sufficiency.

God All-sufficient here is two words, the first being ʾÊl (אֵל) [pronounced *ALE*], a word which has four or five entirely different meanings and several sub-usages within those categories of meanings. One usage has to do with strength and might, and in this regard, can refer to any deity; i.e., the God of the Universe or pagan gods (Isa. 43:10 44:10, 15, 17). It is rarely used alone and can refer to *mighty ones* (a reference to *men* or to *angels*—Ex. 31:11 Isa. 9:6 29:1 89:7) as well as to God (Gen. 31:13 35:1, 3). The second word in this title is Shadday (שַׁדַּי) [pronounced *shahd-DAH-ee*] and it means *(self-) sufficient, almighty, many-breasted* and here it would be best translated *All-Sufficient*. This is the first instance in the Bible where this title is used. We do not know if God uses it first of Himself here or whether it was a title for our Lord just not put into Scripture until now. This designation for our Lord is found 31 times in Job, which is roughly coterminous with this narrative (Job probably took place a few generations earlier). God will renew His covenant with Abram, both for possession of the land of Canaan and for the multitude of his descendants.



El Shaddai graphic from **Blue Letter Bible blog**; accessed December 6, 2013.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

From Syndein's webpage:[3] {Note: RBT says 'El is used for God in His Power - His omnipotence. Shadday is the Hebrew word meaning 'many breasts' - as in a mother feeding many babies. It is used for 'many sources of help' - and becomes 'Almighty'. It means there is no problem in the life a believer for which God has not made provision. But, you must be saved (Abram believed . . .), rebound (Abram returned to Canaan - 1 John 1:9), be in fellowship (walk in My Presence/Way, and demonstrate integrity (Bible doctrine/divine viewpoint transferred from the Written Page into the norms and standards of your soul - and then applied to experience)}.

From the NET Bible:[4] There has been much debate over the meaning of the name. For discussion see W. F. Albright, "The Names Shaddai and Abram," JBL 54 (1935): 173–210; R. Gordis, "The Biblical Root sdy–sd," JTS 41 (1940): 34–43; and especially T. N. D. Mettinger, In Search of God, 69–72. Shaddai/El Shaddai is the sovereign king of the world who grants, blesses, and judges. In the Book of Genesis he blesses the patriarchs with fertility and promises numerous descendants. Outside Genesis he both blesses/protects and takes away life/happiness. The patriarchs knew God primarily as El Shaddai (Ex. 6:3). While the origin and meaning of this name are uncertain (see discussion below) its significance is clear. The name is used in contexts where God appears as the source of fertility and life. In Gen. 17:1–8 he appeared to Abram, introduced himself as El Shaddai, and announced his intention to make the patriarch fruitful. In the role of El Shaddai God repeated these words (now elevated to the status of a decree) to Jacob (Gen. 35:11). Earlier Isaac had pronounced a blessing on Jacob in which he asked El Shaddai to make Jacob fruitful (Gen. 28:3). Jacob later prayed that his sons would be treated with mercy when they returned to Egypt with Benjamin (Gen. 43:14). The fertility theme is not as apparent here, though one must remember that Jacob viewed Benjamin as the sole remaining son of the favored and once–barren Rachel (see Gen. 29:31; Gen. 30:22–24; Gen. 35:16–18). It is quite natural that he would appeal to El Shaddai to preserve Benjamin's life, for it was El Shaddai's miraculous power which made it possible for Rachel to give him sons in the first place. In Gen. 48:3 Jacob, prior to blessing Joseph's sons, told him how El Shaddai appeared to him at Bethel (see Genesis 28) and promised to make him fruitful. When blessing Joseph on his deathbed Jacob referred to Shaddai (we should probably read "El Shaddai," along with a few Hebrew MSS, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint (LXX), and Syriac) as the one who provides abundant blessings, including "blessings of the breast and womb" (Gen. 49:25). (The direct association of the name with "breasts" suggests the name might mean "the one of the breast" [i.e., the one who gives fertility], but the juxtaposition is probably better explained as wordplay. Note the wordplay involving the name and the root שָׁדַד, shadad, "destroy"] in Isa. 13:6 and in Joe. 1:15.) Outside Genesis the name Shaddai (minus the element "El" ["God"]) is normally used when God is viewed as the sovereign king who blesses/protects or curses/brings judgment. The name appears in the introduction to two of Balaam's oracles (Num. 24:4; Num. 24:16) of blessing upon Israel. Naomi employs the name when accusing the Lord of treating her bitterly by taking the lives of her husband and sons (Rth. 1:20–21). In Psalm 68:14; Isa. 13:6; and Joe. 1:15 Shaddai judges his enemies through warfare, while Psalm 91:1 depicts him as the protector of his people. (In Eze. 1:24 and Num. 10:5 the sound of the cherubs' wings is compared to Shaddai's powerful voice. The reference may be to the mighty divine warrior's battle cry which accompanies his angry judgment.) Finally, the name occurs 31 times in the Book of Job. Job and his "friends" assume that Shaddai is the sovereign king of the world (Gen. 11:7; Gen. 37:23; a) who is the source of life (Gen. 33:4 (i.e., Genesis 33:4b)) and is responsible for maintaining justice (Gen. 8:3; Gen. 34:10–12; Gen. 37:23 (i.e., Genesis 37:23b)). He provides abundant blessings, including children (Gen. 22:17–18; Gen. 29:4–6), but he can also discipline, punish, and destroy (Gen. 5:17; Gen. 6:4; Gen. 21:20; Gen. 23:16). It is not surprising to see the name so often in this book, where the theme of God's justice is primary and

[3] From **http://syndein.com/Genesis_17.html** accessed January 18, 2012.

[4] From **http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm** Gen. 17:1 (footnote). Accessed January 18, 2012.

even called into question (Gen. 24:1; Gen. 27:2). The most likely proposal is that the name means "God, the one of the mountain" (an Akkadian cognate means "mountain," to which the Hebrew שַׁד, shad, "breast"] is probably related). For a discussion of proposed derivations see T. N. D. Mettinger, In Search of God, 70–71. The name may originally have depicted God as the sovereign judge who, in Canaanite style, ruled from a sacred mountain. Isa. 14:13 and Eze. 28:14; Eze. 28:16 associate such a mountain with God, while Psalm 48:2 refers to Zion as "Zaphon," the Canaanite Olympus from which the high god El ruled. (In Isaiah 14 the Canaanite god El may be in view. Note that Isaiah pictures pagan kings as taunting the king of Babylon, suggesting that pagan mythology may provide the background for the language and imagery.)].

Genesis 17:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak^{e} (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^{e}*]	*to go, to come, to depart, to walk [up and down, about]; to wander, to prowl; to go for oneself, to go about, to live [walk] [in truth]; to flow*	2nd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (מִנֶּפ) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*]	*face, faces countenance; presence*	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean *before me, before my face, in my presence, in my sight, in front of me*.			

Translation: Walk before Me... God has always had a plan for Abram's life but it has not been until now that this plan kicks into high gear. Abram had to develop a lot of patience and trust to arrive at this point. He has screwed up a couple of times, but he just got up and moved on. His failures did not stop his growth. God gives Abram two imperatives; the first is the Hithpael imperative of *walk*, one of the most used verbs in the OT. The Hithpael is intensive reflexive and it means that Abram is to walk himself. The intensive means that his conduct of life has become even more important than his previous 99 years. *Before me* also means *in my presence*. This is an imperative for all believers; we should all conduct our lives as though God is right there in front of us because He is. We are watched by a multitude of angels and God is omniscient. Since God only spoke directly with Abram on a few occasions (of which we are aware) and since the full revelation of Scripture was not available to Abram, this is the first time when Abram is exposed to God's omniscience. What is occurring is what is known theologically as the *progressive revelation of God*; God did not reveal to Adam, Noah, or to Abram everything about Himself. In fact, we in the church age know more about God's character and actions than any Old Testament saint ever knew. Abram has known God as God, the Highest; as God the All-Sufficient and Omniscient< and here as God Who is omniscient.

There are two characteristics of God which have been emphasized to Abram: that God is omniscient (He is all-seeing; He sees everything); and in this verse, His omnipotence is spoken of. However, Abram is to walk before God (*in His sight, in His presence*); so God's omniscience is brought back into view. Abram is to function as if God is watching him (which He is). R. B. Thieme, Jr. took this concept and said that we are to *live our lives in the light of eternity*. This is very much the same idea. Where we live and what we are at this point in time is transitory. We will awaken at some point and be with God; and that will begin our eternal life with Him.

In this verse, Abram is told to walk before God, walk in God's sight; to live his life in the light of eternity.

Genesis 17:1e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*be, become; make, do*	2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
tâmîym (תָּמִים) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*]	*complete, whole, entire, sufficient, without blemish*	adjective	Strong's #8549 BDB #1071

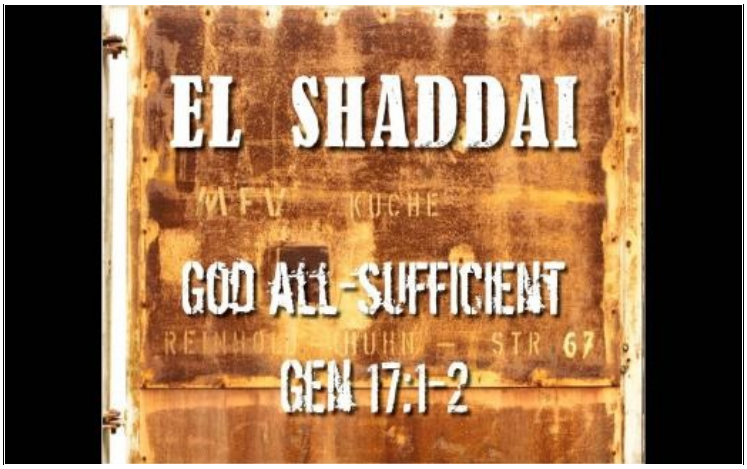
Translation: ...and be complete [spiritually mature];... Although this word can be translated *without blemish,* this is an impossibility for the believer. We may, as we grow spiritually, sin less and less. We may, as we grow older, sin less and less; but we always possess the sin nature. Therefore, we are always capable of sinning; and, in fact, we do sin. We never reach a state of sinless perfection in this life. Therefore, we reach a different state, which might be termed spiritual maturity; and which R. B. Thieme, Jr. has given the names *having an* ***edification complex*** (HTML) (PDF); and *living the* ***supergrace life*** (Prof. Mario Velez) (Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries). These are synonyms for *being complete,* as God is commanding Abram. However, Abram lived in a different dispensation; therefore, spiritual maturity for him is slightly different for him than it is for us. In fact, one of the doctrines we will cover here is, we will reconstruct what the spiritual life was for Abram, 4000 years ago.

> From the NET Bible:[5] Walk [Or "Live out your life." The Hebrew verb translated "walk" is the Hitpael; it means "to walk back and forth; to walk about; to live out one's life."] before me [Or "in my presence."] and be blameless [There are two imperatives here: "*walk* and *be blameless* [or "perfect"]." The second imperative may be purely sequential (see the translation) or consequential: "walk before me and then you will be blameless." How one interprets the sequence depends on the meaning of "walk before": (1) If it simply refers in a neutral way to serving the Lord, then the second imperative is likely sequential. (2) But if it has a positive moral connotation ("serve me faithfully"), then the second imperative probably indicates purpose (or result). For other uses of the idiom see 1 Sam 2:30, 35 and 12:2 (where it occurs twice).

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

We often take verses like this for granted. We read a verse like this in 3 seconds, and give it very little thought. What is God telling Abram to do? When it comes to a specified moral behavior, very little is revealed in Genesis as a clear command. There is a clear commandment not to murder in Gen. 9:6 (which commandment is not so much a prohibition of murder, but what society should do with a murderer). Mankind is told to split up in Gen. 10 (which God forces to happen by confusing the languages). Gen. 12 implies that lying and adultery are wrong. Gen. 14 implies that, in a war, the victor legitimately may take all that belonged to his vanquished enemy. Finally, God legitimizes the authority in slavery in the previous chapter. In other words, in the book of Genesis, as far as we have gone, there is no clearly-defined code of moral behavior which stands written, beyond the implications named. Yes, God tells Abram: "Walk before Me, and be blameless [*complete;* i.e., spiritually mature]."

[5] From **http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm** Gen. 17:1 (footnote). Accessed January 18, 2012.



El Shaddai; God All-Sufficient (graphic); from **Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem**; accessed December 6, 2013.

God first identifies Himself to Abram as *Êl Shaddai,* which means *God Almighty* or *God Most-Powerful*. This is a title which indicates power and ability, which is important here, because God is going to repeat His promise about Abram bearing a son. Abram no longer has the ability to sire a son; Sarai no longer can bear children, so the fulfillment of God's promises are dependent upon God. No one can bring any of God's promises into reality except for God. In order for God's promises to Abram to be fulfilled, Abram will have to depend wholly upon God Most-Powerful, as only a God Who is omnipotent will be able to fulfill the promised which He made to Abram.

Rom. 4:19–21 And not being weak in faith, Abram did not consider his own body already dead (being about a hundred years old) or the deadening of Sarah's womb. He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform. God is able to do what He has promised because He is *Êl Shaddai, God Almighty*.

This title for God is found 6 times in the book of Genesis and 31 times in the book of Job. It is for this, and several other reasons, that the book of Job is thought to be from this era (personally, I think that Job predated Abraham by several generations). This same name for God occurs only 11 times throughout all the rest of the Old Testament books, occurring no more than 2 or 3 times in any single book.

God tells Abram: "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,... In there King James Version, the final word is translated *perfect,* which has caused no little confusion in the Christian doctrine. This word does not mean *perfect* in the sense of attaining some level of sinless perfection in this life. We continue in this life with an old sin nature. We may come to a point where we sin less today than we did 10 years ago; but we do not reach a state of sinlessness, perfection or flawlessness.

What we have here is the imperative of *to be* followed by the adjective tâmîym (תָּמִים) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*], which means *complete, whole, entire, sufficient, without blemish*. When spoken of a man, it means a man who operates on the basis of spiritual integrity; i.e., he is spiritually mature and in fellowship. Strong's #8549 BDB #1071. You may recall that this adjective was applied to Noah in **Gen. 6:9**. In the immediate context, God would be calling for Abram to be in fellowship and focused on the words of God while they discussed this covenant. God expects Abram to hear these words, concentrate on them and to believe them. In the context of the rest of Abram's life (he still has 76 years to live), God wants him to reach a state of completion, which is spiritual maturity, and to maintain that spiritual state. No more fooling around with Egyptian slave girls; no more trying to help God keep His promises.

God has told Abram to be spiritually mature, to behave with integrity. Abram is an important witness in God's program and he is, before the face of God, to show personal and spiritual integrity. God has already blessed him and God has already made several unconditional promises to Abram. Still, God expects Abram to show integrity.

God tells Abram to walk before Him and to be blameless, and this implies that there is some concept of moral or spiritual behavior. However, there is no indication that this standard of morality is enumerated by God at any point; nor has man recorded God's explanation of exactly what this standard of morality is. 500 years or so from this point in time, God is going to give the Law to His people; but right now at this point in time in Gen. 17, God has not laid down a specific set of laws. Almost everything we know about right and wrong, at this point in our walk through Genesis, is found in the implications of the previous chapters, which then logically suggests that what is right and wrong is imprinted on the souls of mankind. Let's go back to Gen. 9:6, which reads: Whoever sheds

man's blood, his blood shall be shed by man. For He made man in the image of God. You will recall that, previous to this, God allowed those who murdered to live. Cain was banished, but not executed. Lamech sang a folk song about murdering and he continued to live and sing about it. But in Gen. 9:6, God sets up consequences, which implies there ought to be specific consequences for certain acts that are wrong. This takes us back to, *how do we know what is wrong?* We have two possibilities: (1) God specifically gave a pre-Mosaic Law, where right and wrong was defined—and there is no indication of that. Or (2) the concept of right and wrong was imprinted on the souls of most men. This does not mean that it is inherent in their souls, but that it is imprinted there. How? By their parents. And they learned it from their parents, who learned it from their parents, who, going back far enough, learned from Noah. Recall that we are not that far removed in time from the flood, and, by one estimation of dates, the sons of Noah are still alive at this time.

God created Adam and the woman, and there was only one defined act of wrongdoing—taking and eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Apart from this, Adam and the woman were created perfect. So, even after they sinned and acquired a sin nature, they understood right from wrong (recall, they ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil). In their souls—which souls were created directly by God—they understood notions of right and wrong. As the population of the earth grew (recall that Adam was nearly 1000 years old), he was able to take what he knew in his soul and apply it to his life. This soulish understanding of right and wrong was carried by many simply through the training that they would have received from their parents. This was certain true of the soul of Noah. Noah was a just man and perfect [spiritually mature] in his generations. Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:9b). Noah would have taught the concepts of right and wrong to his own children, even in a most corrupt world, which world they would all escape. The 3 sons of Noah would continue to perpetuate the morality in their own souls by teaching their sons and daughters, who would perpetuate this teaching.

Furthermore, if Noah's sons are still alive, along with all of their sons and grandsons, it is quite difficult to argue right and wrong with men who learned right and wrong from Noah. One of the reasons a new era must begin with Abram is, God must begin with a man who has righteousness in his soul (a clear understanding of right and wrong); and all of the patriarchs are dying off almost all at the same time.

Let me further suggest that, for many people, during this era, even so separated from God, they had an innate desire to define right and wrong, and to set up just consequences for doing wrong. From this general time period, a number of well-defined codes of ethics were developed.

These are the codes which we actually have records of, which suggests that there were many legal codes from this era.

Ancient Law Codes

Codes	Date	Information
The Code of Urukagina	2,380–2,360 B.C.	Urukagina was a ruler of the city-state Lagash in Mesopotamia circa 2380–2360 B.C.
The Code of Ur-Nammu	circa 2100–2050 B.C.	This is the oldest known tablet which contains a law code that survives today. It was written in the Sumerian language.
The Laws of Eshnunna	1930 B.C.	These laws are inscribed on two cuneiform tablets discovered in Baghdad, Iraq. This law code is named after a city, rather than after a person. This apparently governed an area north of Ur. These laws are written in the Akkadian language.
The Codex of Lipit-Ishtar	1934–1924 B.C.	Lipit-Ishtar was the fifth ruler of the first dynasty of Isin. He is partially known for the legal code written in his name. This is apparently written in Sumerian, and the laws were a legal code, defining specific penalties for specific crimes and acts of wrongdoing.

Ancient Law Codes		
Codes	**Date**	**Information**
The Code of Hammurabi	circa 1780 B.C.	The Code of Hammurabi is a Babylonian law code written by the sixth Babylonian king, Hammurabi

This suggests that during this time period, there was a profound concern with law, morality and legal consequences. This is the time period during which Abram lived.

These references are taken out of Wikipedia, accessed November 16, 2011, and linked below:
The Code of Urukagina
The Code of Ur-Nammu
The Laws of Eshnunna
The Codex of Lipit-Ishtar
The Code of Hammurabi

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

My conclusion would be that, by the teaching of Abram's parents, Abram had a good understanding of right and wrong in his soul. Historically, this was of profound importance to mankind. They were beginning to have groups of families living in close proximity, and codes of behavior had to be established along with laws to regulate groups of people. In a family, particularly with their long lives, they could go to the oldest, who is probably father of all of them, and resolve disputes. However, as these families began to gather side-by-side, codes had to be developed, not just to define morality, but to deal with acts of immorality. Hence, these many codes that we know of. In fact, let me suggest that these codes existed in nearly every city and town; and certainly in any city-state. Just because we have records on these codes does not mean they are the only codes from that era.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

When God tells Abram to walk before Him, this would be analogous to the Christian walk; that is, there would be a modus operandi of some sort that Abram would follow. This is stated specifically with Enoch (Gen. 5:24 Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.) and implied with Noah (Gen. 6:9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.).[6] This spiritual code would include faith in Jehovah Elohim (Gen. 15:6), a limited system of animal sacrifices (Gen. 12:8 13:18 15:9–11), and probably **rebound** (confession of personal sin to God) (**HTML**) (**PDF**) and **faith-rest** (which is what Abram ought to be doing with the promises of God) (**HTML**) (**PDF**).

There would have been a specific moral behavior, but that is much like the function of moral behavior in the Church Age; it is a part of the **laws of divine establishment** (**HTML**) (**PDF**), it is something which Christians ought to adhere to, but it is designed for man universal and not only for believers. These laws are designed to preserve freedom, families, and nations. That is what these codes were all about; and they established a code of justice, necessary for any society.

The actual Hebrew word for *walk* is the Hithpael imperative of the very common word hâlak^{e} (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^{e}*], which means, *to go, to come, to depart, to walk [up and down, about]; to wander, to prowl; to go for oneself, to go about, to live [walk] [in truth]* (these are all Hithpael meanings). Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. Although the Hithpael is most simply described as the reflexive intensive, it actually has several uses which are not specifically reflexive. Here, its iterative use is probably what is meant, which means that there will be several (even thousands) of periods of time when Abram is walking. What follows qualifies the verb "Walk before Me [or, *walk in My Presence*]." This is why there is a spiritual connotation to the interpretation this phrase.

[6] Both quotes from the ESV.

You will recall the Hagar understood God to be the God of Seeing; and she would have learned this from Abram. God is omniscient. Therefore, God is telling Abram to walk before Him, with this understanding. God may not have contacted Abram for the past 13 years, but that does not mean that God is not there. Abram is to conduct his life knowing God is there; knowing that He is an omniscient God. And because God is going to reiterate and expand on His promises, Abram needs to know that God is *able* to bring these promises to pass. God does not need Abram to traipse off with some Egyptian gal in order for His promises to be fulfilled. God is omnipotent. He does not need us to help Him with our human works or with our human schemes.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me [or, *walk in My Presence*], and be complete [whole, sufficient, spiritually mature],...

So, essentially, God is commanding Abram to live the spiritual life and to be spiritually mature. We have guessed what this means, but it is not laid out as a simple, step-by-step process in the book of Genesis (these **mechanics** are clearly laid out for believers in Church Age, however). In order to determine what this means, we need to dig a little deeper into the chapters of Genesis which we have already studied.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me [or, *walk in My Presence*], and be complete [whole, sufficient, spiritually mature],...

In this first verse of Gen. 17, God identifies Himself and gives Abram two mandates: "Walk in My Presence and be spiritually mature." These commands are both in the imperative mood; which suggests (1) these are things that God wants Abram to do; and (2) Abram understands what he is being commanded to do.

As we have already studied, *complete* is the adjective tâmîym (תָּמִים) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*], which means *complete, whole, entire, sufficient, without blemish*. When spoken of a man, it means a man who operates on the basis of spiritual integrity; i.e., he is spiritually mature and in fellowship. Strong's #8549 BDB #1071. So far, we have one clear example of what it means to be *tâmîym,* Noah was declared to be *complete* (*whole, sufficient, spiritually mature*) in Gen. 6:9.

Therefore, let's step back and see if we can understand what the spiritual walk would be for Abram, based upon what stands written in his time.

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

1) Salvation:
   - i. It is clear that salvation is based upon faith in Jehovah Elohim. Gen. 15:6 reads: And Abram had believed Y^{e}howah, and He [God] counted [or, *valued, imputed, regarded*] it [Abram's faith in Y^{e}howah] to him as righteousness.
   - ii. Throughout the book of Genesis, up to this point, we have seen the emphasis which is made upon animal sacrifices, which is a picture of Jesus Christ dying for our sins.
     - (1) In order for Adam and the woman's nakedness to be covered by animal skins, those animals had to be killed, something which had never been done before. They had never seen anything die before and they had never seen blood before. Gen. 3:21
     - (2) God valued Abel's animal sacrifice over Cain's works (bringing a bloodless offering of vegetables). Gen. 4:1–7
     - (3) From the clean animals, Noah was to bring 7 pairs of them. My assumption is, some of those would be used for sacrifice. Gen. 7:2–3
     - (4) Noah, immediately after stepping off the Ark after the flood, began to offer animal sacrifices to God. Gen. 8:20–21
     - (5) Abram, on several occasions, builds altars to God. Since this is clearly associated with Noah and offering up animal sacrifices, we may reasonably conclude that was the purpose of the altars built by Abram. Gen. 8:20 12:7–8 13:4, 18
     - (6) The author of Hebrews explains the connection between the animal sacrifices and the death of Jesus on the cross (Heb. 9:13–20). Even though the author of Hebrews was specifically

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

describing the Mosaic code for sacrifices, this still applies to sacrifices of animals which occurred prior to the Mosaic Law. After all, he was writing to Jews about their rituals, telling them that the reality of those rituals had come to pass, so that there was no further need to practice these rituals now that Jesus had become our sacrifice, one man for all time. Heb. 9:23–28

2) Confession of sin (naming one's sins to God, for which R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the word *rebound*).
   i. When Adam and the woman had sinned, God has them first name their sins to Him. This is established first before God moves forward with His judgment. Gen. 3:9–13
   ii. God attempts to coax a confession of wrongdoing from Cain in Gen. 4:8–10, which confession, God does not seem to get. God imposes a permanent judgment of exile upon Cain in Gen. 4:11–12.
   iii. God speaks to Hagar and she admits what she has done. There is no punishment placed upon her; she is simply told to return to Abram and Sarai. Also, God makes a promise to Hagar about the descendants of her boy. So, interestingly enough, she sins, she admits this sin to God; and she is not punished by God but given promises from Him. Gen. 16:8–13
   iv. In raising a child and teaching them right from wrong, when they do wrong, the first thing that we do when they do wrong is get them to admit what it is that they have done that is wrong.
3) Faith-rest, which is knowing the promises, guarantees and doctrines of God, believing them and adhering to them.
   i. God gave assurances to Cain, even though he may not have gotten back into fellowship. Gen. 4:14–15
   ii. God promises Noah (and all mankind) that He would never flood the earth again. Therefore, man was to operate on that basis, despite the fact that Noah and his 3 sons went through a world-wide flood. Gen. 9:9–16
   iii. God told Abram to go to the land of Canaan, but God also gave promises to Abram, toward which he was to exercise faith. Gen. 12:1–3
   iv. When Abram separated from Lot, God came to Abram again and gave him promises. Gen. 13:14–17
   v. On occasion, God has to reinforce the promises that He made to Abram. Abram questions how these promises are to be fulfilled, and God reiterates the promise, and then gives Abram more information—more promises and prophecies to believe in. The implication is, if you are having trouble believing this or that doctrine, the key is to have more information (more doctrine). God does not simply stop right there, when Abram questions Him, and say, "I am not going to teach you any more until your first believe this." God teaches Abram more. Gen. 15:1–21
   vi. Abram found out, after 13 years of silence from God, that one does not try to bring God's promises to pass by means of human good or by doing things which are outside of God's plan. Abram has also faced 13 years of household friction based upon his mistake of listening to his wife and stepping outside of the plan of God. Gen. 16
   vii. As we have recently studied, God even made specific promises to Hagar in Gen. 16:9–12.
   viii. This may seem pretty elementary, but some people do not get it: *you must have something to believe before you can exercise faith*. Having faith is meaningless unless that faith has an object and that object is true. Everyone has faith; everyone believes in a variety of things. People believe in global warming, evolution, supply-side economics, conservative principles socialism, and abortion (which they call a woman's right to choose). These things may be true or false; but all kinds of people believe in some of those things. Having faith is not enough. God does not look down and say, "Wow, you *really* believe in evolution; your faith is strong; I appreciate that." Your faith is of no value when it is placed in the wrong things. Your faith must have an object and that object is truth, also called Bible doctrine. It is not your faith, per se, which is meritorious; it is the object of your faith that is meritorious.
   ix. Paul will, many centuries later, tell us that there is a righteousness associated with faith in God's promises. Rom. 4:19–22 And [Abraham] being about a hundred years old, not weakening in faith, he did not consider his body to have died already [he was sexually dead], nor yet the death of Sarah's womb, and he did not stagger in unbelief at the promise of God [that they would have a

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

son], but was strengthened by faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God has promised, He is also able to do. Because of this, "it was also counted to him for righteousness." You will note that Paul has taken the words of Gen. 15:6 and given them a different application here. Abram will place his faith in what God has promised, and *this* faith—the faith that Abram places in the promises of God—would be credited to Abram as righteousness. This is fascinating because Paul took a promise of salvation to Abram and gave it a new spin—his faith in God's promises. Therefore, subsequent to salvation, faith in God's promises are counted to Abram as righteousness. So there is an accumulated righteousness which is a part of our lives post-salvation, that when we believe God's promises, *this* faith is counted as righteousness. In the New Testament, we call this experiential sanctification or phase II sanctification. We are already saved, but we continue to accumulate righteousness based upon our faith in God's promises, doctrines and mandates.

4) The concept of grace—which is an attitude that results in acts that bestow upon people that which they do not deserve.
   i. From the very beginning, God came to Abram and promised to make a great nation of him and to give him the land of Canaan. At this time, Abram had done very little that we could consider meritorious. Gen. 12:1–3
   ii. Abram rescued Lot. It was Lot who chose to associate himself with the most degenerate elements of Canaan. Lot did not deserve Abram's faithfulness or the deliverance that he brought to pass. Gen. 14:12–16
   iii. Abram is gracious toward the King of Sodom, returning to him both his people and all of their belongings, which Abram could have legitimately kept. Gen.14:21–23
   iv. However, closely associated with Abram's graciousness is his not requiring his friends to be held to the same standard. That is, Abram did not impose his standards of righteousness upon others. They were remunerated for their services. Gen. 14:24
   v. Even though we have grace being taught throughout Gen. 14, the Old Testament word for *grace* will not be found until Gen. 19:19 (which will indicate that, in the midst of judgment, there is God's grace).
5) Blessing by association and cursing by association.
   i. Forever, nations would be cursed or blessed based upon their relationship with God's people, the Jews. Gen. 12:3 ("And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.")
   ii. Lot was blessed by his association with Abram. Gen. 13:6
   iii. Lot was cursed by his association with the worst elements of Canaan. Gen. 14:12–14 15:13–16 19:1–28
   iv. This concept may be further generalized into being blessed if you are in association with those associated with God; and cursed if you are in association with those who are in rebellion against God.
6) The concept that Jesus Christ (in the Old Testament, Jehovah Elohim) controls history. This is most clearly seen and understood in **Gen. 14** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) and **Gen. 19** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
   i. We have already studied Gen. 14, which is simultaneously, one of the greatest and one of the most ignored chapters in Scripture. Abram led a tiny battalion of about 300 men against a brigade of possibly 3000–5000 well-trained soldiers and they defeated the larger army, causing them to retreat, and changing history in that region.
      (1) By the way, if you scoff at this and say, "That is just silly; these things don't happen." Israel today is a tiny country; it is 0.2% of land mass of the Middle East. All around them are people who have been raised from childhood to hate the Jews. There are nearly 8 million people in Israel, ¾^{ths} of whom are Jewish (I write this in 2012). They are surrounded by countries which hate them. Egypt has about 85 million people and various political parties in Egypt continually speak of the destruction of Israel. Syria has nearly 23 million people. Iran has about 78 million people. All of these nations are, for the most part, hostile toward Israel. There are 1 billion Muslims in this world; they are hostile to Israel. Why don't they simply attack Israel?

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

Because of 6 days in 1967, when the Jews fought against Syria, Egypt and Iraq and defeated them. Israel fought an offensive war and God gave them victory. Although a repeat of this war in 1973 was not as successful for Israel (they were not as aggressive to begin with), still, the small population of Israel held their own against nations which were much larger (Egypt and Syria). Since Israel's war of independence, there are been a dozen wars between the Jews and others in their periphery, and Israel has continued to increase their land holdings.

ii. Back to Gen. 14, and God controlling history. God wanted Abram to meet Melchizedek, which came about because of Abram's military victory, which took place in the proximity of Melchizedek's city. Jesus Christ controls history.

iii. Abram showed grace to the King of Sodom, which gave him a window of time during which he could have turned his own city-nation around. However, this king simply took from Abram what he was given, and had little interest in what was in Abram's soul to make him do what he did. Similarly, the king of Sodom and his people had little interest in Melchizedek.

iv. Quite obviously, with the flood and with the confusion of the languages, God has controlled history throughout the ages.

v. In application to today, we believers in the United States must continue to have faith in Jesus Christ controlling human history, because our nation is in the worst shape it has ever been in. There are many nations with large armies that do not like us. We have a national debt as we have never had before. Our government has made trillions more in promises which it has no ability to keep (with regards to social security and medicare), and we have a huge number of people who refuse to think that this is a problem. So, whatever happens in the next year, or the next decade or in the next half-century, our faith needs to be in Jesus Christ, that He controls history.

7) Obedience to God's commands:

i. God told Noah about the flood to come and told him what to do to prepare for it. What Noah did in building the ark and gathering all of the animals was acting in obedience to God's Word. Gen. 6:12–22

ii. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–5) was disobeying the order from God for man to swarm the earth (Gen. 9:7). God told Noah not to worry about being flooded after the great flood, and the Tower of Babel appears to have been built with the partial intention of a place of safety in a great flood.

iii. God came to Abram and told him to move to Canaan. The Jewish race is dependent upon Abram's obedience to God's geographical will. Gen. 12:1–5

iv. Abram tried to fulfill God's promises to him by having sex with Hagar, in order to raise up a son, and God put Abram on the shelf for 13 years. His faith and resultant actions were misplaced. Gen. 16:3–4, 16 17:1

8) Living our lives, making choices and doing things, based upon what we know about God. God did not follow Abram every step of the way, saying, "Now, go 5 miles southwest, take a 10 minute rest, and then go 3 miles west." That is, the spiritual life does not consist of following a long list of specific, narrow and tedious commands from God, which guide our each and every step. Obedience to God, does not mean that He stands there as a drill sergeant, orchestrating our each and every move, Whose orders we obey robotically. The process is far more organic than that.

i. Let me give you the football game analogy. During a football game, every individual player operates on the basis of free will and, even though there are well-defined and well-practiced plays, every player has to also be cognizant of events transpiring around them. 11 coaches are not simultaneously speaking into 11 headsets telling each and every player what to do next. God has designed us to have a modicum of independence and to make a variety of free will choices. However, these choices must be made according to the rules of the game, as football players must follow. A pass receiver might see an open spot out of bounds, but he is wasting his time to rush to that open spot in the stands.

ii. God appears to Abram about a half-dozen times, and each time is for a fairly short period of time. In the interim of these appearances are years of Abram's life, where he functions, having God's promises, but without having God continually come to him, telling him exactly what to do moment by moment. Gen. 14 is a perfect example of Abram doing what is right, but without God telling him

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exactly what to do, moment by moment. Although God is always with Abram, as He is with all of us, God is not right there with us, telling us each and every step to take and direction to move in. For this reason, Hagar calls Him, a *God of Seeing*.

iii. Therefore, the function of our free will in our lives and doing what ought to be done is very much the spiritual life (in conjunction with being in fellowship and knowing God's Word). In Gen. 14, Abram did not sit around and wait for God to give him marching orders. He had to act and he acted. He had to save his nephew Lot. Gen. 14 represents one of Abram's greatest spiritual victories. One might even say there was symbolic indication of this spiritual victory, where Abram went from offering animal sacrifices to taking the wine and bread in a pre-Church Age communion service. Gen. 14:18

iv. Many systems of evil seek to restrict the free will of man, particularly when it comes to expressing our spiritual lives. In communist countries, Christianity is all but outlawed; in Muslim countries, Christianity is outlawed and/or viciously persecuted; in liberal thinking, no government official ought to publically profess faith in God or faith in Jesus Christ. We have actually had government authorities tell chaplains and pastors what they can and cannot say in various services.

(1) There was an attempt to **remove *God* from public prayers at veterans' funerals** (leading to the common sense question, *just Who the hell are you praying to, then?*).

(2) New York City Mayor Bloomberg thought that **prayers mentioning God at a 9-11 memorial were inappropriate** (causing many to ask, just who exactly are we praying to, then?).

(3) One religious writer for the Washington Post **warns that there are times the majority in a democracy ought not to get what it wants**, if we are speaking of the 65% of Americans who want to see prayer reinstituted in school. He also suggests considering prayers without the mention of God or religion, whatever that means.

(4) We have a myriad of instances where the words *Christmas* and *Easter* are virtually banned from mention, in public schools which just happen to celebrate those holidays each and every year. Many such schools do not hold a Christmas pageant or allow the singing of Christmas songs, even thought this is a rich tradition in American history. If a principal of a school came on the intercom and recited George Washington's Thanksgiving message or even a public prayer from FDR, he would be disciplined or fired by the school board for his over-the-top religious fervor.

(5) Chaplain Klingenschmitt's, a former Navy Chaplain, **was court-martialed and fired for praying publicly in uniform "in Jesus name."**

v. We have the illustration of our own children. We want the best for them and we don't want them to make a series of life-destroying mistakes. Therefore, we raise them with the best intentions of guiding them, knowing that, at some point, they will function independently of us. The last thing a normal parent wants to do is be with their child every minute of the day telling them what to do next and what not to do. I believe the contemporary term for this is *helicopter parents*.

vi. We live lives, therefore, with some independence from God, but functioning within the boundaries that He has established.

9) When Abram meets Melchizedek, they seem to bond immediately, based upon the fact that they both worship of the same God, even though these men had no previous contact and are likely only distantly related to one another (they share the common ancestors of Adam and Noah, but are probably descended from different sons of Noah).

10) In this era, there was a rudimentary understanding of the **laws of divine establishment**, which many rulers attempted to **codify** into law at that time. These were laws which applied to all of their citizens, in order to have an orderly society. Again, Gen. 14, while illustrating Abram able to act and make good decisions without God telling him what to do; we also got to peer into the understandings of morality and the interaction of nations at that time.

i. Some of these laws of divine establishment would include punishment by society for murder. However, there is no indication in Scripture that this ought to be practiced by vigilantes. Gen. 9:6

ii. The concept of nationalism over internationalism is taught in Gen. 11:1–9

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iii. The right of self-defense, the right of defending one's own family, and the right to the spoils of war are all found in Gen. 14.

iv. Although God would give the land of Canaan to Abram's progeny, this would be based upon the great degeneracy of the Canaanite people in the land. This also indicates that, being the first people into a geographical area does not guarantee perpetual ownership or control over that geographical area, either morally or actually. Gen. 12:1–2 13:15–17 15:13–16 17: 19:1–28

v. God punishes nations for great degeneracy within that nation, which punishment can include being defeated militarily and even having one's land taken away. Gen. 15:13–16 19:1–28

11) Although there are the laws of divine establishment and there was an attempt to codify that which is true, that does not mean that cultural norms and standards define what is right and wrong.

i. When Abram and Sarai decided to use Hagar as a surrogate mother, this was in accordance with the customs of that day, but it was not in God's directive will that Abram impregnate Hagar.

ii. Although it was legitimate for Abram to keep the goods and people that he liberated in Gen. 14, he kept neither. At this point, he was obeying higher principles of his faith in God blessing him as He had promised.

12) There is a concept of right and wrong—one's conscience—which is embedded in the soul. This conscience appears to be fairly well-developed in some, and I would attribute that to parental training and guidance.

13) So, even though we do not have the spiritual life laid out for us step-by-step in the book of Genesis, there is enough information here so that we can understand that there was, nevertheless, a well-defined spiritual life. Furthermore, when God tells Abram to live the spiritual life, that suggests that Abram understood what God was telling him to do.

This information, primarily culled from Gen. 3–16, taken with the various laws and codes which were developed during this time period, indicates that there was certainly a rudimentary spiritual life for believers as well as a national code of morality and justice for unbelievers (which we call the laws of divine establishment).

Similarly, the book of Job, besides giving us a lot of information about the Angelic Conflict in the first two chapters, also allows us to see 4 men from the ancient world discussing their ideas about God, the world they live in, their lives, and the application of what they believed to be universal spiritual laws to their lives. This book, more than likely, took place prior to Abram or coterminous with Abram's life.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

For an historical context, I believe it is important to stop, like we did here, and review, and see if there was a spiritual life defined for believers in Abram's era, as there is for us in the Church Age. Because Gen. 3–16 covers an era of 1000–2000 years, the limited amount of writing that exists in the canon of Scripture has to be carefully searched to recognize the continuities between our time and theirs. Furthermore, this helps to explain what God means when He tells Abraham to walk before Him and to be spiritually mature:

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

So far, God has delivered a series of commands and promises to Abram, which is why he is living in Canaan in the first place. However, there is no indication that God has ever laid out a system of specific laws and that the pre-Mosaic spiritual life is only implied. However, as we have studied in previously that there appears to be enough information presented so that we can reasonably determine the basic spiritual life for believers and the concept of right and wrong for believers and unbelievers alike (the common morality for believers and unbelievers is known as *divine establishment* or the ***laws of divine establishment***). So, the function of the spiritual life combined with the morality of the laws of divine establishment was how a believer was to function.

In fact, one of the things which has been lost to our society is the concept of right and wrong, good and bad, which is for nations of believers and unbelievers both. In the United States, this is being foisted upon our young in the form of relativism, humanism and multi-culturalism (all of which are taught in the public schools); and in Muslim countries, sharia law is replacing divine establishment laws. It would be wrong for believers to think that morality applies to them alone; and for unbelievers to think, whatever they think they ought to do, that is what they ought to do (or, as it phrased in the book of Judges, *every man did what was right in his own eyes*—Judges 17:6 21:25; see also Deut. 12:18 Prov. 12:15).

As we will soon discover, nations are preserved by the believers in that nation. Some of that preservation is direct. That is, if there is a large percentage of believers in a nation and a reasonable percentage of them understand Bible doctrine, then the nation is preserved simply because so many in that nation understand the **laws of divine establishment**. The direct influence of such believers on a society helps to preserve that society. As divine norms and standards are a part of the lives of believers in a society; and these believers are large enough in size to affect that society, in this way the society is preserved. That is the principle; we will study it in the not-too-distant future.

As an aside, one way that concepts of right and wrong are distorted in a society is by taking the vocabulary of right and wrong and distorting that. We have seen that in the past few years with the word *justice,* redefining it in such a way so as to reflect Marxist thinking (state directed redistribution of wealth), as in *economic justice;* or to reflect fanatical environmentalism, as in *environmental justice* (which is a cover for *economic justice*). These very same people would shrink back in horror, if you were to suggest any restrictions be placed on their sexual behavior, even though there are simple straight lines that can be drawn from sexual immorality to crime, increased immorality, increased lawlessness (which 3 things are a result of single motherhood), and a decreased lifespan (which results from homosexual activity). On the other hand, when it comes to so-called economic justice, any attempt to equalize income distribution results in a less productive, a less free and a more restrictive society. So, these same people who want complete freedom when it comes to sexual behavior—regardless of the negative consequences on society—are more than willing to place devastating restrictions on the productive elements of their society.

Back to Abram. It is 13 years after Ishmael was born to him by Hagar, his wife's Egyptian slave-girl; and God appears to Abram once again.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

God reminds Abram that He is omnipotent and indicates that there is a specific *walk* for believers, as well as a concept of spiritual maturity even in Abram's day, over 4000 years ago.

...and so I give my covenant between Me and between you and I will multiply you exceedingly, exceedingly."	Genesis 17:2	**...and I will grant My contract between Me and you. Furthermore, I will greatly multiply [your descendants]."**

...and I will establish My covenant between Me and you. Furthermore, I will greatly multiply your descendants."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And I will set My covenant between My Word and thee, and will multiply thee very greatly.
Latin Vulgate	And I will make my covenant between me and thee: and I will multiply thee exceedingly.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so I give my covenant between Me and between you and I will multiply you exceedingly, exceedingly.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.

Significant differences:

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	I will keep my solemn promise to you and give you more descendants than can be counted."
Easy English (Pocock)	Then I can make my *covenant between me and you. I will give you very many *descendants.'
Easy-to-Read Version	If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation.”
Good News Bible (TEV)	I will make my covenant with you and give you many descendants."
The Message	I'll make a covenant between us and I'll give you a huge family."
New Berkeley Version	I will make My covenant between Me and you and I will in a most unusual way multiply you.
New Century Version	I will make an agreement between us, and I will make you the ancestor of many people."
New Life Bible	And I will keep My agreement between Me and you. I will give you many children."
New Living Translation	I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...and I will establish a Sacred Agreement between you and Me; and I will also give you great prosperity!'
Ancient Roots Translinear	I gave my covenant between me and you, to multiply you a ||hundredfold||."
Beck’s American Translation	And I will make My covenant with you, and I will make you the father of very many people.
Christian Community Bible	I will make a covenant between myself and you, and I will multiply your race.”
God’s Word™	I will give you my promise, and I will give you very many descendants."
New American Bible	Between you and me I will establish my covenant, and I will multiply you exceedingly. Gn 12:2; 13:16; Ex 32:13.
NIRV	I will now put into practice my covenant between me and you. I will greatly increase your numbers."
New Simplified Bible	»I will establish my covenant between us. I will greatly increase your numbers.«
Revised English Bible	...so that I may make my covenant with you and give you many descendants.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And I will make an agreement between you and me, and your offspring will be greatly increased.
Conservapedia	I will make My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you more numerous than you can imagine."
The Expanded Bible	I will make an ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18] between ·us [└me and you], and I will make you ·the ancestor of many people [└exceedingly numerous]."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and I will make a Covenant between Myself and you; and I will increase you very, very greatly.”
HCSB	I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."

NET Bible®	Then I will confirm my covenant [tn Following the imperative, the cohortative indicates consequence. If Abram is blameless, then the LORD will ratify the covenant. Earlier the LORD ratified part of his promise to Abram (see Gen. 15:18–21), guaranteeing him that his descendants would live in the land. But the expanded form of the promise, which includes numerous descendants and eternal possession of the land, remains to be ratified. This expanded form of the promise is in view here (see Gen. 17:2 (i.e., Genesis 17:2b); Gen. 17:4–8). See the note at Gen. 15:18 and R. B. Chisholm, "Evidence from Genesis," A Case for Premillennialism, 35–54.] between me and you, and I will give you a multitude of descendants [Heb "I will multiply you exceedingly, exceedingly." The repetition is emphatic.]."
NIV – UK	I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	I will make my covenant between me and you, and I will increase your numbers greatly."
exeGeses companion Bible	...and I give my covenant between me and between you and abound you mightily mighty.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous.”
Kaplan Translation	I will make a covenant between Me and you, and I will increase your numbers very much.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And I will confirm My brit (covenant) between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And I will make My covenant (solemn pledge) between Me and you and will multiply you exceedingly.
Concordant Literal Version	And giving am I My covenant between Me and you, and increasing am I you exceedingly exceedingly.
English Standard Version	...that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."
Heritage Bible	And I will give my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.
LTHB	...and I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you very much.
NASB	"I will establish [Lit give] My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."
New RSV	And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.'
Syndein	And I will give { nathan-grace operation-God does the work} My covenant {b@riyth - and this is 'unconditional' here - no dependence on Abram or what 'work' he does} between me and you, and multiplying . . . I will multiply { m@`od m@`od - doubling of the word - very strong} you {Abram} exceedingly {many, many nations will be descended from Abram}.
A Voice in the Wilderness	...and I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly abundantly.
Young’s Updated LT	...and I give My covenant between Me and you, and multiply you very exceedingly.”

The gist of this verse: God reminds Abram of his covenant with him.

Genesis 17:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*]	*to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make*	1st person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
All of the BDB meanings for the Qal stem of nâthan are as follows: *1) to give, put, set; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1a2) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1a3) to make, constitute*.			
The hê at the end is called a voluntative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word *let, may, might, ought, should*.			
b^{e}rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #996 BDB #107
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #996 BDB #107

Translation: ...and I will grant My contract between Me and you. ... God has a particular contract or covenant which He will give to one person—that person is Abram. God did not go around and willy nilly offer up covenants to a variety of people (like Buddha or to Mohammed). This is specifically God's contract and it will be made specifically between Abram and God.

This is the second time that God has spoken of making a covenant with Abram, the first being back in Gen. 15. Although God has talked with Abram on 3 previous occasions, only once did God speak about a covenant. A covenant is simply an anachronistic word for *contract*. Sometimes Christians hold on too tightly to some of these anachronistic words, and young people are confused and put off by their foreign-sounding words (churches which continue to use the excellent but anachronistic KJV should be warned about this). God is simply making an agreement with Abram; He is establishing a contract with Abram.

The word here generally translated *to make, to establish* is actually the very common Hebrew word *to give*. Anytime you see *God* as the subject, *give* as the verb, and some person or group as the recipient of that gift, we are talking about *grace*. Grace may be defined as, *all that God is free to do for us based upon the cross; and which things God does for us, are undeserved by us*. We have touched on **grace** in the previous lesson, but we have not yet fully studied this word.

This verb is nâthan (נָתָן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means: *1) to give, put, set; 1a) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1b) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1c) to make, constitute*. All of these BDB meanings for the Qal stem of nâthan. Strong's #5414 BDB #678

At the end of the verb *to give,* we have the cohortative hê, which simply means that the Hebrew letter hê (ה) is added to the end of the verb. When applied to the first person, the idea is an expression of will or compulsion, and in the singular, may be expressed with *I must, I could, I would, I will, I should, I may*.

God has promised Abram that He would make Abram a great nation, a father of many people, and is about to begin to fulfill those promises to Abram. The promise of most concern to Abram is the one of children; Abram has desired children for most of his 99 years on this earth and God has promised him that he would have children and that his progeny would be like the sand of the sea. Abram has trusted God perhaps 15 years ago on this point (in Gen. 15), but now he is sexually dead and the possibility of having children, other than Ishmael, seems quite unlikely.

God has always been here with Abram, tapping His foot, as it were, waiting to bless Abram by giving him an agreement, a gracious contract. In Gen. 15, it appeared as though God was going to start to make good on His promises made thus far to Abram, and then, Abram went out ahead of God and impregnated Hagar the Egyptian slave-girl. So, for 13 years, God has been there, tapping His foot, waiting to give grace to Abram.

Let's not become confused here. God has not withdrawn His promises from Abram. God is not punishing Abram for 13 years because of his dalliance with *Little Egypt*. What Abram did was throw off the timetable. God cannot desert Abram's seed, which is Ishmael, born to him by Hagar. So God allows Ishmael to be born and to grow into a young man (13 years old). God's specific promises to Abram had to be put on hold until that time.

Abram's spiritual heritage is going to flow through one very specific genetic line, which line will be begun with a child sired by Abram and carried by Sarai. God still has to allow for Abram's decision to impregnate Hagar; and time must be allowed for their child to be raised properly in a good environment. That takes 13 years. So, for all intents and purposes, Abram is not waiting on God but God is waiting on Abram.

Application: Is God waiting on you to move His plan for you forward?

Genesis 17:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râbâh (הָבָר) [pronounced *raw^{b}-VAWH*]	*to make [do] much; to multiply, to increase; to give much; to lay much; to have much; to make great; many* [as a Hiphil infinitive construct]	1st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7235 BDB #915
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally *to, toward*	affixed to a 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 17:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning*	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
m^{e}ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^{e}-ODE*]	*exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547
m^{e}ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^{e}-ODE*]	*exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

Translation: ...Furthermore, I will greatly multiply [your descendants]." As a part of God's contract—or, as a part of His relationship with Abram, God promises to multiply Abram, which suggests that God would multiply Abram's descendants.

Gen 17:1–2 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."

God has to let certain things run their course before He can step back into Abram's life. Raising up Ishmael to the point of being a young adult has to occur, and then God can come back to Abram and give him grace. God can come back into Abram's life and bless him with a gracious contract. But, because of Abram's actions, God had to wait. This was not punishment to Abram; God has not walked off in a huff, saying, "I'll show him!" A certain amount of time has to transpire and Ishmael has to become a young adult before God can step back into Abram's life and to continue the work which God had begun.

Walking before God and being spiritually mature means, Abram is in fellowship (there is no unconfessed sin in his life), he is trusting God's promises, and he is obedient to the laws of divine establishment.

To multiply is in the Hiphil imperfect. The *Hiphil* is the causative stem, and this verb is given the following Hiphil definitions: *to make much, make many, have many; to multiply, increase; to make much to do, do much in respect of, transgress greatly; to increase greatly or exceedingly; to make great, enlarge, do much*. What follows is a repetition of the adverb m^{e}ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^{e}-ODE*], which means *exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*. Strong's #3966 BDB #547. Not only is the verb intensified, but it is doubly intensified, as this adverb occurs twice, which is rare in the Hebrew. Verbs in the Hebrew are often doubled, relatively speaking; adverbs much less so. This indicates that God has an incredible amount of blessing that He wants to pour on Abram.

Abram is just one man, a very successful rancher, who comes down to us today as one of the most well-known people from the ancient world. During Abram's day, there were many vigorous peoples, many powerful nations; and yet, the most well-known person of this era is Abram. What king from Abram's day is as well-known? What king or man of great power can you name from that era (say, 2100–1900 B.C.)? And yet, Abram is not a king he is simply a very successful businessman, successful because God has greatly blessed him. He is known to us today as the father of the Jewish race or the father of the Jewish people. Furthermore, he is known to us because God promised him, "I will multiply you greatly."

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Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God Renames Abram, as a Part of the Covenant Promise

And so falls Abram upon his face; and so speaks with him Elohim, to say,...	Genesis 17:3	**Abram then fell upon his face; and God spoke to him, saying,...**

Abram then fell on his face; and God spoke to him, saying,...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And because Abram was not circumcised, he was not able to stand, but he bowed himself upon his face; and the Lord spake with him, saying...
Latin Vulgate	Abram fell flat on his face.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so falls Abram upon his face; and so speaks with him Elohim, to say,...
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying,...
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abram fell upon his face, and God spoke to him, saying,...
Significant differences:	The Latin sensibly takes the latter half of this verse and places it with v. 4. This explains some of the translations below. The targum adds all kinds of additional material, much of which is false or not pertinent.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Abram bowed with his face to the ground, and God said:...
Easy English (Pocock)	Then Abram *bowed down with his face close to the ground. God spoke to him.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abram bowed down before God. God said to him,...
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abram bowed down with his face touching the ground, and God said,...
The Message	Overwhelmed, Abram fell flat on his face. Then God said to him,...
New Berkeley Version	Abram fell on his face while God continued speaking to him:...
New Century Version	Then Abram bowed facedown on the ground. God said to him,...

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well at that, Abram fell with his face [to the ground]. Then God spoke to him [again], saying,...
Ancient Roots Translinear	Abram fell toward his face. God spoke with him, saying,...
God's Word™	Immediately, Abram bowed with his face touching the ground, and again God spoke to him,...
New Jerusalem Bible	And Abram bowed to the ground. God spoke to him as follows,...
Revised English Bible	Abram bowed down, and God went on,...
Today's NIV	Abram fell facedown, and God said to him...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abram went down on his face on the earth, and the Lord God went on talking with him, and said,...
Conservapedia	Abram fell on his face. God continued to talk with him, saying,...
The Expanded Bible	Then Abram ·bowed facedown on the ground [└fell on his face]. God said to him,...
New Advent Bible	Abram fell flat on his face.

NET Bible®	Abram bowed down with his face to the ground [tn Heb "And Abram fell on his face." This expression probably means that Abram sank to his knees and put his forehead to the ground, although it is possible that he completely prostrated himself. In either case the posture indicates humility and reverence.], and God said to him [tn Heb "God spoke to him, saying." This is redundant in contemporary English and has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.],...
NIV – UK	Abram fell face down, and God said to him,...

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Avram fell on his face, and God continued speaking with him:...
exeGeses companion Bible	And Abram falls on his face: and Elohim words with him, saying,...
JPS (Tanakh—1917)	And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further,...
Kaplan Translation	Abram fell on his face. God spoke to him [again], saying,...
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Avram fell on his face; and Elohim talked with him, saying,...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And falling is Abram on his face.
English Standard Version	Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him,...
Syndein	And Abram kept on falling face {picture of his own helplessness - a perfect response to the grace of God}. 'Elohim/Godhead kept on communicating categorically {dabar} {with him}, saying {'amar}...
World English Bible	Abram fell on his face. God talked with him, saying,...
Young's Updated LT	And Abram falls upon his face, and God speaks with him, saying,...

The gist of this verse: Abram falls on his face before God, and God continues speaking with him.

Genesis 17:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*]	*to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
ʾAbᵉrâm (אַבְרָם) [pronounced *abᵛ-RAWM*]	*father of elevation, exalted father;* and is transliterated *Abram*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #87 BDB #4
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced *ġahl*]	*upon, against, above*	preposition	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
pânîym (מִפְנֵי) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*]	*face, faces, countenance; presence*	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular) with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Genesis 17:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, ʿâl and pânîym mean *upon his face of, facing him, in front of him, before (as in preference to) him, in addition to him, overlooking him*.			

Translation: Abram then fell upon his face [or, *in front of Him*];... It has been 13 years since Abram has spoken with God. This is somewhat of a shock to him, and he takes this meeting quite seriously, falling on his face. You will note that there are two different ways of interpreting this final phrase; Abram can either be falling upon his own face; or he can fall in front of God.

This is new. Abram's response was to do obeisance to God, which is something he has not done before. God has not spoken to Abram for a long time. God spoke to Hagar, Sarai's slave girl, 13 years previous to this (which information, she apparently passed along to Abram), and prior to that, God spoke to Abram, which would have been perhaps 15–20 years previous (Abram left Charan at age 75, and he is now 99). Therefore, Abram, having no idea how much longer he will live, is quite overwhelmed to speak to God again.

It is reasonable to suppose that Abram has remembered and/or recorded all that God said to him earlier. In other words, all of the contact between God and Abram are recorded for us today. There is no reason to think that there were several other meetings between God and Abram that Abram chose not to talk about.

My guess is, this is not a forced reaction, or something that Abram thinks about, and then does. My thinking is, after all of this time, Abram automatically falls to his face in front of our Lord. He does not do it intentionally to indicate his respect, but does this as an automatic reaction to God standing before him and speaking.

Somehow, in some way, we have taken a very casual attitude toward God. Some of us think that, if we spoke to God, we'd be like, "That's right; it's cool. I'm probably cool since God is here speaking to me." If it were not for God's justice, which has been satisfied at the cross, God could cast us immediately into the Lake of Fire. For whatever sins we have doing lately, God could lay out all kinds of punishment upon us.

So, Abram, after this time, has become more responsive to God, not less. As I have suggested earlier, I believe that Abram received the Word of God from Melchizedek (the first 10–12 chapters of Genesis and perhaps the book of Job) and had spent time reading it, to understand God. Or, as I have suggested before, it is possible and reasonable that Melchizedek *gave* these books to Abram verbally. Abram's thinking was superior to ours and that he had memorized these pages of God's Word and was, over the past 13 years, calling them back into his mind, and thinking about them. As a result, his respect for God has increased immensely.

Genesis 17:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
dâbar (דִּבֶּר) [pronounced *daw^{b}-VAHR*]	*to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*	3rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180

Genesis 17:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
ʾĔlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*]	*to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think*	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Translation: ...and God spoke to him, saying,... As has been mentioned, the Latin Vulgate wisely places this half of v. 3 with v. 4. However, it ought to be noted here that God does not speak *to* Abram, but He now speaks *with* Abram. That is an important advance. It suggests that Abram has advanced spiritually.

The Hebrew is much more difficult that most English translations make it out to be here. First of all, there are 2 verbs here which mean *to speak*. The first is the Piel (intensive stem) imperfect of dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw*^{b}*-VAHR*], which means (in the Piel): *to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. Strong's #1696 BDB #180. This phrase ends with the words *to speak, to say* (the more common verb for *to say*). Furthermore, we do not have the normal preposition here; we would expect the lâmed preposition, which simply means *to* or the more formal preposition, *unto*. What we have here instead is, *with*. The implication is, God is speaking to Abram as a friend and willing to interact with him. Literally, this reads: And so speaks with him, Elohim [the subject of the verb, in Hebrew, usually follows the verb], to say... My point is, this is much more formal than it appears in most English translations.

Gen 17:3b And Elohim spoke with him, saying,...

God is about to lay out His covenant with Abram, so the Hebrew indicates that this is a very formal event.

"I, behold, My covenant [is] with you and you have been to a father of a multitude of nations.	Genesis 17:4	**"[It is] I; listen, My contract [is] with you and you will be a father of many [gentile] nations.**

"Listen to Me! My agreement is with you; you already have become a father of many gentile nations.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos — Behold, I have confirmed (or divided) my covenant with you; and you will be the father of many peoples.

Latin Vulgate	And God said to him: I am, and my covenant is with you, and you will be a father of many nations.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	“I, behold, My covenant [is] with you and you have been to a father of a multitude of nations.
Peshitta (Syriac)	As for me, behold, I am establishing my covenant with you, and you shall be a father of many peoples.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I, behold! My covenant [is] with you, and you shall be a father of a many nations.

Significant differences: The Latin more sensibly affixes v. 3b to v. 4. The English translations from the targum and from the Syriac insert a verb at the beginning. The Hebrew verb *to be* is in the perfect tense. However, it is a future middle indicative in the Greek and appears to be a future tense in the targum, Latin and Syriac. The preposition found in the Hebrew is not found in the other ancient translations.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	"But me, my covenant is with you; you will be the ancestor of many nations.
Contemporary English V.	I promise that you will be the father of many nations. That's why I now change your name from Abram to Abraham. This is actually vv. 3–4 combined.
Easy English (Pocock)	'Look! I have made a *covenant with you. You will be the father of a great crowd of nations.
Easy-to-Read Version	“This is my part of our agreement: I will make you the father of many nations.
Good News Bible (TEV)	"I make this covenant with you: I promise that you will be the ancestor of many nations.
The Message	"This is my covenant with you: You'll be the father of many nations.
New Century Version	"I am making my agreement with you: I will make you the father of many nations.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'Look; I am making My Sacred Agreement with you. You will become the father of many nations.
Ancient Roots Translinear	"Behold me and my covenant with you! You are the father of a multitude of nations.
God’s Word™	"My promise is still with you. You will become the father of many nations.
New American Bible	For my part, here is my covenant with you: you are to become the father of a multitude of nations. Sir 44:21; Rom 4:17.
New Jerusalem Bible	'For my part, this is my covenant with you: you will become the father of many nations.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	As for me, my agreement is made with you, and you will be the father of nations without end.
Conservapedia	"As for Me, look: My covenant is with you, and you will be a father of many ethnic groups.
The Expanded Bible	"I am making my ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18] with you: I will make you the father of ·many [└a host/multitude of] nations.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	“I now make a Covenant with you, and you shall be a father of many nations;...
New Advent Bible	And God said to him: I am, and my covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. You see here how this follows the more logical Latin Vulgate with regards to the verses.
NET Bible®	"As for me [tn Heb "I."], this [Heb “is” (הִנֵּה, hinneh).] is my covenant with you: You will be the father of a multitude of nations.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Kaplan Translation	'As far as I am concerned, here is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a horde of nations.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	As for Me, hinei, My brit (covenant) is with thee, and thou shalt be an Av of many Goyim [see 18:18].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	As for Me, behold, My covenant (solemn pledge) is with you, and you shall be the father of many nations.
Concordant Literal Version	And speaking with him is the Elohim, saying, "I, behold! My covenant is with you. And you are to become the forefather of a throng of nations.
English Standard Version	"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.
Heritage Bible	As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many peoples..
New RSV	`As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations.
World English Bible	"As for me, behold, my covenant is with you. You will be the father of a multitude of nations.
Young's Updated LT	"I—lo, My covenant is with you, and you have become father of a multitude of nations;...

The gist of this verse: God tells Abram that His covenant is with Abram and that he is a father of many nations.

Genesis 17:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾânîy (יָנֲא) [pronounced *aw-NEE*]	*I, me;* in answer to a question, it means *I am, it is I*	1st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*]	*lo, behold,* or more freely, *observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out*	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
Hinnêh can be used as a particle of incitement.			
b^{e}rîyth (תִיִרְב) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Translation: "[It is] I; listen, My contract [is] with you... Jesus Christ, the Revealed Member of the Trinity is standing; Abram is laying on the ground; and Jehovah Elohim says, "I, listen!" Or, "Behold Me!" The idea is, while Abram is laying there, he needs to pay close attention.

God never had to tell Abram to fear Him or to give Him reverence. Abram was well-acquainted with God's power and majesty and that he, Abram, was nothing in comparison. He immediately does obeisance to God, being in His presence. One of the toughest words to translate and make work in the demonstrative particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*] and it means to *pay attention, listen to this, observe, give me your undivided attention*. It is too often anachronistically translated as *behold!* or *lo!* God promises to Abram that He will give him a great number of descendants and that these descendants will become many nations.

13 years have passed since God last spoke to Abram. Abram may have even thought that God was now working through Hagar, as God had spoken to her and gave him a son through her. God assures Abram that His covenant is with Abram. God has not gone off and made a covenant with someone else; God did not make a covenant with Hagar.

Like v. 3b, this phrase is also more complicated that most English translations make it out to be. Literally, it reads: "I, behold! My covenant [is] with you." Some translators render this, "As for Me, behold..." Several ignore these first 2 Hebrew words. Essentially, the first 2 words might be more idiomatically rendered, "Listen to Me" "Listen up" "Pay attention to what I am going to say." Remember, Abram fell on the ground before God. God needs his full attention here.

The second phrase leaves out the verb *to be,* which indicates great emphasis in these words. Elliptical phrases often indicate great emphasis. As mentioned before, God has not said anything to Abram, and now He tells him to listen, saying, "My covenant with you!" The idea is, God has not changed His mind. He has not been observing Abram over the past 15 or so years, deciding, "Naw, I need to pick someone else as a part of my covenant." The power and force here indicates that we are speaking of something which is quite exclusive and directed specifically toward Abram. God is not going around and making agreements with several dozen people. This is a very specific and very exclusive contract that God is making with Abram.

There is a reason I am putting great emphasis upon this: God, who is all-knowing (Job 37:16 Psalm 139:1–4 147:4–5), Who knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), did not make a mistake by choosing Abram and He is not going to transfer all of His promises to Abram to another group of people (the church) because the Jews never turned out to be quite the people that God wanted them to be. That view is called **Covenant Theology**, and it is the basis for much of the Christian theology today. God will set the Jewish race aside, for a time, and work through the church (just as He has done with Abram), but the Jews are still His people.

Genesis 17:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Additional meanings of the lâmed preposition: *with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to*.			

Genesis 17:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.			
ʾâb (אָב) [pronounced *aw^{b}v*]	*father,* both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; *founder, civil leader, military leader*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1 BDB #3
hâmôwn (הָמוֹן) [pronounced *haw-MOHN*	*multitude, crowd, throng; murmur, roar, abundance, tumult, sound, murmur, rush, roar; tumult, confusion; great number, abundance; abundance, wealth*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1995 BDB #242
gôwyîm (גּוֹיִם) [pronounced *goh-YIHM*]	*Gentiles, [Gentile] nations, people, peoples, nations*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

Translation: ...and you will be a father of many [gentile] nations. Almost every translation I read has the verb as a future tense. However, God says, "You are [already] a father of many nations." Or, "You have become a father of many gentile nations." The verb is in the perfect tense, which means, this is an established fact; this thing has already occurred in some point in time. However, quite obviously, Abram has but one son. Insofar as God is concerned, Abram is already the father of a multitude of nations. He already has a down payment on this promise; Ishmael, Hagar's child, was born to Abram. This is at least one nation, the Ishmaelites. And Ishmael will begin having a number of children right from the get-go.

Also in this second half of the verse is the untranslated lâmed preposition. Its use here seems to be #4 above; the mark of the dative case. Abram is the father of many gentile nations; this is to his benefit; to his advantage.

God tells Abram that he will be the father of many nations; so from Abram will not just come Israel (in its various forms), but a number of Semitic nations. *Semitic* then refers back to Shem, Abram's ancestor from the ark. Today, we use the term *Semitic* to refer almost exclusively to Jews.

Gen 17:1–4 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me, My covenant [is] with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

Up to this point, Sarai, Abram's wife, had talked Abram into siring a wife by her Egyptian slave girl, Hagar, which Abram did. Although this was culturally acceptable, it was outside of the Divine plan for Abram. Although God has never specifically told Abram that his seed would come through Sarai, all historical precedents involved one husband and one wife. God began with Adam and Eve, not Adam, Eve + 1 surrogate mom. Although marriages to more than one woman existed, they were aberrant coalitions.

So, God did not abandon Abram's child by Hagar; but this was outside of God's directive will, and our study of what the spiritual life was in the ancient world involved a one-man/one-woman marriage (which is a part of the laws of divine establishment, which apply to all people).

So, 13 years have gone by since Abram's child was born, and during that time, God did not appear to Abram. However, God is with Abram now, and this will be a pivotal chapter, both in the life of Abram and in human history.

———————————

God continues speaking to Abram, saying something which is quite unusual:

And not named yet your name, Abram; and has become your name Abraham, for a father of a multitude of nations I have given you.	Genesis 17:5	**No longer is your name called Abram; but [lit., *and*] Abraham has become your name, for I have made you a father of many nations.**

No longer will your name be Abram, but Abraham is now your name, for I have made you the father of many nations.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And thy name shall be no more called Abram, but Abraham shall be thy name, because to be the father of a great multitude of peoples have I appointed thee.
Latin Vulgate	Neither shall your name be called any more Abram: but you shalt be called Abraham: because I have made you a father of many nations.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And not named yet your name, Abram; and has become your name Abraham, for a father of a multitude of nations I have given you.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many peoples.
Septuagint (Greek)	And your name shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations..

Significant differences:

The Hebrew is quite clunky at first—and perhaps it is very proper Hebrew, as God is speaking. It is hard to pick out the subject of the verb—which appears to be Abram. However, it seems to make more sense you have *your name* as the subject of the verb, which is what is found the English translations from the targum, the Latin and the Syriac. The actual Greek, and not the English translation above, matched the Hebrew nearly exactly in this first phrase.

The second phrase sounds like the future tense in all of the ancient translations. However, it is the perfect tense in the Hebrew, indicating, most of the time, an accomplished fact. For God, who is not subject to time, this would be an accomplished fact; albeit, difficult to translate.

The final verb is also in the perfect tense, and that is how it appears to be translated in the ancient translations.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	And because I have made you the ancestor of many nations, your name will no longer be Abram [Or exalted ancestor] but Abraham [Or ancestor of a multitude]..
Contemporary English V.	That's why I now change your name from Abram to Abraham.
Easy English (Pocock)	Your name will not be Abram any longer. It will be Abraham because I will make you the father of a great crowd of nations.
Easy-to-Read Version	I will change your name. Your name will not be Abram [This means "honored father."] —your name will be Abraham [This means "great father" or "father of many."]. I give you this name because I am making you the father of many nations.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Your name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham, because I am making you the ancestor of many nations.
The Message	Your name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham, meaning that 'I'm making you the father of many nations.'
New Berkeley Version	Your name shall no longer be Abram but your name shall become Abraham, because I have designated you a father of many nations;...
New Century Version	I am changing your name from Abram [Abram This name means "honored father."] to Abraham [Abraham The end of the Hebrew word for "Abraham" sounds like the beginning of the Hebrew word for "many."] because I am making you a father of many nations.
New Living Translation	What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham [Abram means "exalted father"; Abraham sounds like a Hebrew term that means "father of many."], for you will be the father of many nations.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And your name will no longer be called Abram. it will be AbraHam, 5 for I have made you the father of many nations.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Never call your name Abram again. Your name is Abraham (father of multitudes), given to you as a father of a multitude of nations.
God's Word™	So your name will no longer be Abram [Exalted Father], but Abraham [Father of Many] because I have made you a father of many nations.
New American Bible	No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham,* for I am making you the father of a multitude of nations. Neh 9:7.
New Simplified Bible	»You will no longer be called Abram (Exalted Father). Your name will be Abraham (means Father of Many). I have made you a father of many nations.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	No longer will your name be Abram, but Abraham, for I have made you the father of a number of nations.
Conservapedia	In fact, your name will not be Abram anymore. From now on, your name is Abraham, because I have made you a father of many nations. In Hebrew, the name Abram means "exalted father," but Abraham means "father of a multitude." Notice the common root ?? (av-), "father," in both names.
The Expanded Bible	I am changing your name from Abram [[C]meaning "exalted father"] to Abraham [[C]sounds like "father of a multitude" in Hebrew] because I am making you a father of ·many [[L]a host/multitude of] nations.
NET Bible®	No longer will your name be [tn Heb "will your name be called."] Abram. Instead, your name will be Abraham [Your name will be Abraham. The renaming of Abram was a sign of confirmation to the patriarch. Every time the name was used it would be a reminder of God's promise. "Abram" means "exalted father," probably referring to Abram's father Terah. The name looks to the past; Abram came from noble lineage. The name "Abraham" is a dialectical variant of the name Abram. But its

significance is in the wordplay with אַב־הָמוֹן (’av-hamon, “the father of a multitude,” which sounds like אַבְרָהָם, ’avraham, “Abraham”). The new name would be a reminder of God’s intention to make Abraham the father of a multitude. For a general discussion of renaming, see O. Eissfeldt, “Renaming in the Old Testament,” Words and Meanings, 70-83.] because I will make you [tn The perfect verbal form is used here in a rhetorical manner to emphasize God's intention.] the father of a multitude of nations.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Your name will no longer be Avram [exalted father], but your name will be Abraham [Avraham in Hebrew. It is related to Av Ham, the 'father of hordes,' but the 'r' is retained.] [father of many], because I have made you the father of many nations.
Kaplan Translation	No longer shall you be called Abram. Your name shall become Abraham, for I have set you up as the father of a horde of nations.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Neither shall thy shem any more be called Avram, but thy shem shall be Avraham; for Av hamon Goyim (Father of a multitude of Goyim) have I made thee. *[T.N. Ga 3:29 says "And if you belong to Moshiach (YESHAYAH 53:10), then you are of the ZERAH of Avraham Avinu, you are yoreshim (heirs) according to the havtachah (promise).]*

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	Nor shall your name any longer be Abram [high, exalted father]; but your name shall be Abraham [father of a multitude], for I have made you the father of many nations.
Concordant Literal Version	And no further shall your name be called Abram. Yet your name becomes Abraham, for the forefather of a throng of nations have I made you.
English Standard Version	No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.
exeGeses companion Bible	...and your name is no more called Abram, but your name becomes Abraham; for a father of a multitude of goyim I give you:.
Heritage Bible	And your name shall not any more be called Abram [Abram means High Father, and], and your name shall be Abraham [Abraham means Father Of A Multitude.], because I have made you a father of many peoples..
Modern KJV	Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham. For I have made you a father of many nations.
New RSV	No longer shall your name be Abram [That is exalted ancestor], but your name shall be Abraham [Here taken to mean ancestor of a multitude]; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations.
Syndein	"Neither shall your name {shem} any more be kept on calling 'Abram' {means 'father of high and windy places'}, but your name . . . {shall be} 'Abraham' {means 'father of many nations'}. For a 'father of great multitude' {'ab + hamown} of nations {gowy} have I {God} given {you to be}." {Note: As Abram, God took him to the top of a mountain and said look in all directions. This land I give to you. Abram was the 'father of all the mountain peaks that he saw'. Now, God is changing his name to Abraham because He is ready to fulfill His promise to make him the father of many nations. The name comes before the son comes.}.
Young’s Updated LT	...and your name is no more called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for father of a multitude of nations have I made you.

The gist of this verse: God renames *Abram Abraham*.

Genesis 17:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lôʾ (אֹל or אוֹל) [pronounced *low*]	*not, no*	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
There are several ways this negation is used. (1) It is an absolute *no* given to a question. (2) It can be used as an interrogative when an affirmative answer is expected. 2Kings 5:26 Job 2:10 Jer. 49:9. (3) It can be used to mean *without*. 1Chron. 2:30 Psalm 59:4 Job 12:24 34:24. (4) It can be translated *not yet*. 2Kings 20:4 Psalm 139:16. (5) The negative is prefixed to adjective to negate them; to substantives to indicate that they are not that thing. Although some claim that this negation can stand on its own to mean *nothing;* there is no clear proof of that.[7]			
qârâʾ (אָרָק) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*]	*to be named; to be called, to be proclaimed; to be called together [assembled, [summoned]; to be read aloud, to be recited*	3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
ʿôwd (דּוע) [pronounced *ģohd*]	*still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; more, farther, besides; as yet, yet, still, even yet*	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
With the negative, this means *never again, no more, not...anymore, not again*.			
ʾêth (תֵא) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (מֵש) [pronounced *shame*]	*name, reputation, character*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
ʾAb^{e}râm (מָרְבַא) [pronounced *ab^{v}-RAWM*]	*father of elevation, exalted father;* and is transliterated *Abram*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #87 BDB #4

Translation: No longer is your name called Abram;... Although this sounds a bit clunky, we ought to assume that God knows good sentence structure in the Hebrew. My guess is, this is very formal Hebrew. Although it seems more natural to me for *your name* to be the subject of the verb and *Abram* to be the direct object, it is the other way around in the Hebrew. Trying to make up for often involves adding additional words: "And no longer is Abram the designation of your name..." *Exalted father* is what *Abram* means.

Even though the Hebrew is somewhat of a struggle here, the meaning of the Hebrew is clear: "Your name will no longer be called Abram."

[7] Taken from H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament;* ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 425 (abbreviated).

Genesis 17:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced *shame*]	*name, reputation, character*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: ...but [lit., *and*] Abraham has become your name,... God renames *Abram Abraham*. Now, interestingly enough, the verb is a Qal perfect, which indicates a completed action. So, insofar as God is concerned, *Abram's* name has been, in eternity past, changed to *Abraham*.

God changes Abram's name to Abraham. *Abram* means *exalted father; father of high and windy places* One might even understand Abram to mean *father of wind*. However, his new name is Abraham, the name by which we know him. *Abraham means father of many*. *Abram* can be understood to mean that Abram is the father of nothing; or the father of something that is just too far off to see; he is the father of something which cannot be seen. However, his new name is *father of many,* which indicates that this is a major change for Abram. He is still a father, but he is no longer a father of *wind* but of *many,* of *a multitude*.

I believe that the implication here is, *Abraham* has experienced some spiritual growth. In raising his son and in teaching him what he should be teaching him, Abraham has come to better recognize his place in this world and his relationship to God.

I recall a cult of several years ago, which, for all I know, may still be in existence. This cult noticed that our Lord changed to name of Abram to Abraham and Saul of Tarsus to Paul, and made a play on words with the apostle Peter's name. For this reason, they all renamed themselves with some *holy* name. Get a clue, people. These people did not name themselves; God named them; God did not rename everyone in the Bible, only a small handful of believers were given a new name. These cults grab onto one or two small portions of Scripture; they do not grasp God's plan as a contiguous whole, and are entrenched in apostasy because of that. Almost every *Christian* cult begins with some undisciplined, charismatic person suffering from power and approbation lust, and they do a limited search of God's Word. Too often, they don't get very far out of the Old Testament, or they get caught in the sermon on the mount, or they dig in at Acts 2 and they do not realize that you cannot base your theology on a dozen or two dozen verses, and then bend the remaining Scriptures to fit this limited view. If you desire to know God's Word, there is one way and one way only to start; and that is under the tutelage of a pastor-teacher which God has provided. We are nowhere commanded to study God's Word for ourselves or to go off to some cave and meditate until the truth comes to us. God has delivered His Word to us and we are to apprehend it; but it is by means of a pastor-teacher who is firmly grounded in the Word, who teaches using ICE principles (isagogics, categories and exegesis). If the primary way of teaching in your church is your pastor takes a verse or a passage and continually launches out into another topic; where the Bible is used as a springboard; or if he teaches primarily by jumping from Scripture to Scripture, quoting *proof texts*, then you need to move on.

When I first believed in Jesus Christ, or was positive toward Him and wanted more, I began reading and listening to almost anything I could get my hands on. If they would send it to me for free (since I was quite poor) I would

check it out. As a result, I listened to many persuasive speakers of many cults, read very persuasive literature of several cults, and realized that these could not all be simultaneously correct. I applied (without knowing it) a simple Biblical principal—by 2 or 3 witnesses (Deut. 17:6 19:15 Matt. 18:16 II Cor. 13:1) shall a fact be established. Three of the people who I listened to, R.B. Thieme, J. Vernon McGee and Duane Spencer, all were independent of one another, yet appeared to have basically the same viewpoint of salvation, God's Word and theological matters in general. Furthermore, two of them taught verse by verse, exegetically. In the cults, there were two or three who might agree, but they all belonged to the same cult. Furthermore, in studying these various cults, I noticed that each doctrine was justified by a proof text, and sometimes, but not often, two. I came to find out the most fundamental issues presented to the unbeliever and the basis for our so great salvation, Christ's death on the cross on our behalf, that we might obtain eternal salvation, eternal fellowship with God by simply believing in Him without any works of any kind, were not based upon one or two proof texts, but a multitude of texts. I once typed 10–11 pages of verses on **Salvation** alone (**HTML**) (**PDF**) which dealt with those simple issues alone, with practically no commentary, just verse after verse which showed that we are to believe in Christ for salvation and that we attain this so great salvation apart from our works but based upon the merit of Christ's work on the cross. For this reason, all minor points of doctrine should be supportable by 2 or 3 verses and the very essence of our faith should be dependant upon a wealth of Scripture. My point here, of several points, is that I did not sit down and begin reading the Bible for myself. I understood its importance, to a limited degree, and I listened to those who were learned in the Word, and finally put myself under the direction of one pastor, R.B. Thieme, who, at the time, I found to be personally offensive.[8]

A minor point: don't change your name. Don't be a fool. God did not call us into service to change our own names as an early step in our ministry. We are a witness to those around us and when they see things like that and think *cornball*. If you are not a good witness to a sharp unbeliever, then keep your mouth shut and do not tell anyone that you are a Christian. You want Scriptural references for this? Several times, people came to our Lord and asked to be healed, and our Lord sent them away telling them to not say a word to anyone (Mark 5:19, 20, 43). It is not God's plan for everyone of us to begin witnessing for Him two minutes afer our new birth. Enthusiasm is wonderful but when we tell unbeliever things which are false and continually lead them into side issues, then we are not of any benefit to God. Get a clue from this verse: Abram is 99 and **now** God will bless him with a son and begin the most important phase of his life; Abram has been saved for decades. How old was Noah when he built the ark? How old was Moses when he lead the children of Israel out of Egypt? How long after Paul was knocked on his butt by Jesus Christ before he began to teach? No great spiritual hero began a productive spiritual life two minutes after salvation; or two days or two months after salvation. Keep your mouth shut and grow up a little first.

This is a point which I recall R. B. Thieme, Jr. making on several occasions. Some celebrity will believe in Jesus and suddenly, he will be used by one or several organizations to make a pitch for believing in Jesus Christ. A newly-saved celebrity is no different from any other recently saved person. They know next to nothing at salvation. Using such a one to “sell” Jesus is misplaced enthusiasm at best, crass salesmanship techniques at worst. We do not have to “sell” Jesus. This does not mean that an evangelist ought to be unemotional and use the same approach time after time; it simply means that the evangelist functions within the confines of his own spiritual gift and personality, and allow the Holy Spirit to work His will. I have seen an excellent evangelist on several occasions (**Gary Horton**), and the power of the Holy Spirit is amazing.

God changes Abram's name at this point. Abram means *exalted father* or *father of high and lofty places* or *father of nothing*. Most of you can see the progression of the meaning of *Abram*. When you are a father of high and lofty places, then you can be viewed as an exalted father or as a father of nothing. It was a play on words and Abram was a father of nothing. Ishmael did not count; he was unimportant when it came to Abram's true spiritual heritage. Ishmael’s line would not be followed out, as he represents the works of the flesh. This is not so much based on the immorality of the situation but upon this being a human viewpoint solution.

Abraham means *father of a multitude*. Abraham has one child that does not count and God renames him as a father of a multitude. Abraham when he hears his name called will be reminded daily of God's promise to him. Then God continues with His promises to Abraham:

[8] I did outgrow these negative feelings toward him.

Abraham is a father of a multitude and a father of nations. There were at least 5 nations which sprung from his loins alone when it came to Jewish nations; and there were several Arab nations which probably came from his loins.

Genesis 17:5c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
kîy (יִכ) [pronounced *kee*]	*for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time*	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʾâb (בָּא) [pronounced *aw^{b}v*]	*father,* both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; *founder, civil leader, military leader*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1 BDB #3
hâmôwn (הָמוֹן) [pronounced *haw-MOHN*	*multitude, crowd, throng; murmur, roar, abundance, tumult, sound, murmur, rush, roar; tumult, confusion; great number, abundance; abundance, wealth*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1995 BDB #242
gôwyîm (גּוֹיִם) [pronounced *goh-YIHM*]	*Gentiles, [Gentile] nations, people, peoples, nations*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*]	*to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make*	1st person singular, Qal perfect with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
All of the BDB meanings for the Qal stem of nâthan are as follows: *1) to give, put, set; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1a2) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1a3) to make, constitute*.			

Translation: ...for I have made you a father of many nations. This final phrase is the justification for why God has named *Abram Abraham;* God made Abraham, in eternity past, the father of many nations.

Now let's take vv. 4–5 together: "[It is] I; listen, My contract [is] with you and you will be a father of many [gentile] nations. No longer will your name be Abram, but Abraham is now your name, for I have made you the father of many nations. Abram is to be known as *a father of [many] nations,* and hence, his name is changed to *Abraham*.

Both of the verbs at the end of this verse are in the perfect tense, indicating a completed action. "You name has been Abraham for I have [already] made you the father of a multitude of nations." So, forever, his name has been Abraham and forever, Abraham has been the father of a multitude of nations.

God exists outside of time; God is not confined to time. Time is God's invention for man. Therefore, from God's point of view, this name-change is a done deal; this has already been accomplished. From Abraham's vantage point, his being named *Abraham* has just occurred, and these multitudes of nations are future from this point in time. To God, these things have already taken place, hence the perfect tense, indicating completed action. We will find this approach throughout this chapter.

If at the beginning of this study, if you knew very little about the Bible, you still probably knew the name of Abraham and you may have even known him as the father of the Jewish race. All this time, you may have

wondered why his name has been Abram or you may not have even known that we were even talking about Abraham all this time. Because his name *has been* Abraham and God has already made a multitude of nations come from him.

One of the cults that I was familiar with, took in new cult members and gave them new names (usually from the Bible). I supposed this was based upon God renaming Abram here and Saul of Tarsus took the name Paul. However, this is not spirituality. You don't walk into a church and someone says, "Your name used to be Charley Brown, but now it is Hezekiah" (they like to take your new name out of the Bible). This sort of thing is goofy. However, it is common for a cult to take a minor occurrence in the Bible and turn it into a fundamental church doctrine or practice. It is as if they find 40 or so passages, and they build their doctrine upon those particular passages. There is never the instruction in the Bible that we are commanded by God to rename people. This is why verse-by-verse teaching is so essential; it keeps you from falling into cults or into churches with a lot of false principles.

I mention this not because you are familiar with such a cult, because you probably are not. You probably recognize that as a goofy idea without me telling you that it is. I mention this because it lays the groundwork for an important principle for the Christian life. Just because something happens in the Bible, Old or New Testaments, does not mean that you should imitate it. The Bible is filled with verbs in the imperative mood, so it is not as though we lack direction in the Bible; but there is no imperative mood when it comes to changing the name of people like Abram (Abraham) and Saul of Tarsus (Paul). Their new names are indicative of what God has done in their lives; therefore, it is appropriate that God renames them, as God knows what is planned for them.

Let me take a practice that most Christians agree upon: the Eucharist (also called Communion). We may have disagreements about the way this is practiced and what it means, but one thing is clear: this is a ritual all Christians should participate in. Not only do we have the example of the first Communion occurring with Jesus and His disciples on the night in which He was betrayed, but, Jesus tells us to do it, using the imperative mood. "Do this in memory of Me." When we hear or read the imperative mood, that ought to get our attention.

Now, let me append this slightly. There are some *conditional* statements in the Bible (*if...then...* statements) which also teach spiritual mechanics. 1John 1:9 If we name our sins, [then] He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is a mechanic designed for the believer (most of the epistles are written to believers; *Hebrews* being an exception in part). In order to be temporally cleansed, we name our sins (*after* we have sinned, of course). There are synonyms for this practice of naming our sins where the imperative mood is used: walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16); be a follower of God (Eph. 5:1); be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18); "Abide in Me" (John 15:4); and walk in love (Eph. 5:2). In order to reach the status of *walking in the Spirit, being filled by the Spirit, walking in love, being a follower of God,* we use the exact mechanics given to us in 1John 1:9.

What I am doing here is setting you up for something; I am planting a seed in your soul. You may find this or that thing in the Bible, and this or that thing may be fundamental to your church's doctrine and practice. However, you may need to ask yourself—particularly if it is a controversial practice—did anyone at anytime in the Bible tell you to do this practice? Did God or Paul or Peter or John use the imperative mood and tell you, "Do this"? At any time have you been told that you ought to do this practice—not by someone in your church, but by the Bible itself? Is this a practice or a doctrine which is clearly laid out in Scripture which is not based upon imitation alone?

Let me lay out a simple principle, and leave it here: if your church, denomination or group imitates something that they have found in the Bible, and yet, God the Holy Spirit through Scripture has not commanded you to do this (either by using the imperative mood or some other unambiguous language), then let me submit to you, that could be a false tradition at best and a cultic practice at worst.

Let me give a specific example: the gift of tongues. Is there any Scripture in the Bible which mandates that you get the gift of tongues or that many people in your church ought to practice the gift of tongues all at the same time? Of course there isn't. That is because the gift of tongues died out once the gospel and Bible doctrine began to be spread around to countries which spoke languages other than Greek or Aramaic. Once the gospel and Bible

doctrine has become known in these other countries and once the authority of the Apostles has been established, then there is no reason for the gift of tongues. Speaking gibberish in a crowd of other gibberish speakers may make you feel good or emotionally gratified, but our feelings are not the final arbiter of the spiritual life. The Bible is. See the **Gift of Tongues** (HTML) (PDF).

One of the reasons that we must know the Word of God is, we find out if we belong to a church or denomination which has traditions and practices which are outside of what God has specifically told us to do. The Bible is our life-manual; it is our Standards and Practices textbook.

Back to Abraham:

Gen 17:3b–5 And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me [= listen up!], My covenant [is] with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

The verbs which are future for Abraham are actually in the perfect tense, indicating that these are past events or completed events, when spoken by God. "Behold Me! My covenant with you and you **have been** the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name **has been** Abraham, for I **have made** you a father of nations."

Let me get into the weeds here a little bit with the Hebrew language. In the past (and in some Hebrew classes today), we have the misnomer, the *wâw conversative*. It is claimed that the wâw conjunction (and/or the wâw consecutive) convert the verbs from perfect tense to imperfect (from a completed action to a future action) or vice versa. Well, as far as I am concerned, that is a lot of hooey. I have translated entire books word-by-word from the Hebrew, and there was never a need to convert this or that verb to a different tense. In a narrative, about every 6th word or so is the wâw consecutive and all of the verbs are imperfect tenses. Converting them all to the perfect tense makes no sense.

On the other hand, because of the way that we write and think, we may translate such verbs in the past tense; but this has nothing to do with the way that these verbs were meant to be understood. In my very literal translation of the Bible, I make every attempt to correctly translate the verbs and connectives accurately. I often change the tense of the verbs in the nearly-literal translation. That is simply based upon the way that we think and talk. So, in the Hebrew, a narrative may be strung together with several wâw consecutives followed by several imperfect verbs, and what is being conveyed is consecutive actions without respect to their duration. However, because these things occurred so long ago in the past, we often translate them with past tenses. We loose the immediacy of the action by doing this, but that simply reflects the way that we write and think.

I think it is passages like this which caused the original confusion. Nearly every English translation and even many ancient translations take these verbs in the perfect tense and change them into the future tense. With respect to Abraham, all that is being said is either occurring right at this instant or will occur in the future, so we often use the present or future tense to express the action here. However, one very important consideration is being ignored. God is speaking and He has decreed all that will occur, taking our free will into consideration (which God always does). For God, the One using these verbs, this has already happened. God uses these verbs in the perfect tense, because all that is contained in vv. 4–5 is what God has decreed, so, insofar as God is concerned, these are accomplished events. These things have already taken place because He has decreed them and He is not confined to time.

Let me see if I can present an analogy here that is easier to grasp than saying that God invented time and that God is outside of time. Let's say you just saw a movie and you thought it was great. At the end of the movie, the hero shoots the bad guy dead and rides off into the sunset with the beautiful girl. It moved you so much, that you take your best friend or significant other to go see it. Now, you know how this movie turns out; you know the end from the beginning. You still enjoy this movie because you are sharing it with a friend, but you know the hero is going to get the girl; and you know that he will shoot the bad guy dead. You, in seeing this movie a second time, are seeing it from a different perspective. All of the events that are future in the movie for you have already

occurred and you know what they are. So, in that way, you are standing outside of the time frame of the movie, and all that takes place in the movie has already taken place for you. For your friend, these events are still unfolding until the last frame of the picture; he or she doesn't know if the hero will shoot the villain yet; he or she has doubts about the hero getting the girl at the end and riding off into the sunset. So, for you, these events have already taken place; for your friend, they are future events and unfolding as the movie continues. You, like God, stand outside of the time frame of the movie, because you have seen it already. You may catch some plot points that you missed before. "Oh, there's how the hero got a hold of the gun; that's how he *shot* him." Even though, during the second time through, the hero has not yet shot the villain, you see it as an action which has already occurred and you even use past tense verbs in your thought process.

For God, because He decreed these things to come to pass, taking into consideration the free will of Abraham and all those associated with Abraham, He knows the end from the beginning. Therefore, God speaks of these things in the past because, God has decreed them, and therefore, they have already occurred. If Abraham were speaking, then he would use the future tense, because the action of these verbs is future for him.

Now, let's apply this to your life: God knows everything that will occur in your life. Nothing will catch Him by surprised. God, in eternity past, made provision for every difficulty that you would face. The are difficult situations in your life to come (or situations that you are in right now), and God had designed a solution for them. This may involve you making certain choices with regards to Bible doctrine and they may involve you to stand back and watch the deliverance of the Lord. The choice of what you do is based upon your knowledge of Bible doctrine. Your ability to make the right choice is always based upon the Word of God. Do you stand back or do you act? The better you know Bible doctrine, the easier this question is to answer. God obviously knows because He made provision for that difficulty back in eternity past; the better we know God, the easier it is to determine His path for us.

And I have caused you to be fruitful, in exceedingly, exceedingly and I have made you to nations and kings from you come forth.	Genesis 17:6	**And I have caused you to be exceedingly fruitful—extremely [fruitful]—and I have made [transformed] you into nations and kings will come from you.**

And I have already caused you to become extremely, exceedingly fruitful, and I have transformed you into nations, and kings will come out of you.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And I will make you exceeding fruitful, and will set you for congregations; and kings ruling over peoples will come forth from you.
Latin Vulgate	And I will make you increase exceedingly, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come out of you.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And I have caused you to be fruitful, in exceedingly, exceedingly and I have made you to nations and kings from you come forth.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And I will make you fruitful, and multiply you exceedingly; and I will make you father of many nations, and kings shall come out of your loins.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I will increase you very exceedingly, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you.
Significant differences:	The Syriac appears to add in another verb to go with the double adverbs. The Greek does double up on the adverb as we find in the Hebrew. The 3 verbs in the Greek are in the future tense; this appears to be the case for the Latin and Syriac as well. In the Hebrew, the first two verbs are in the Qal perfect. In God's thinking,

these are completed actions, but they are future for Abram; so the tense of the ancient languages is understandable.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I will make you very fertile. I will produce nations from you, and kings will come from you.
Contemporary English V.	I will give you a lot of descendants, and in the future they will become great nations. Some of them will even be kings.
Easy English (Pocock)	I shall give you very many *descendants. I shall make you into nations. You will have some *descendants that will be kings.
Easy-to-Read Version	I will give you many, many descendants [A person's children and their future families.]. New nations and kings will come from you.
Good News Bible (TEV)	I will give you many descendants, and some of them will be kings. You will have so many descendants that they will become nations.
The Message	I'll make you a father of fathers--I'll make nations from you, kings will issue from you.
New Berkeley Version	I will render you extremely fruitful [Abram—exalted father; Abraham—father of a multitude]. Out of you I will make nations and from you kings shall spring.
New Century Version	I will give you many descendants. New nations will be born from you, and kings will come from you.
New Living Translation	I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	I will make you grow tremendously; I will make nations come from you, and kings will descend from you.
Ancient Roots Translinear	I will make- you fruitful a ||hundredfold||, and give you nations. Kings will proceed from you.
Christian Community Bible	I will make you more and more famous; I will multiply your descendants; nations shall spring from you, kings shall be among your descendants..
New American Bible	I will make you exceedingly fertile; I will make nations of you; kings will stem from you.
New Jerusalem Bible	I shall make you exceedingly fertile. I shall make you into nations, and your issue will be kings.
Revised English Bible	I shall make you exceedingly fruitful; I shall make nations out of you, and kings shall spring from you.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	I will make you very fertile, so that nations will come from you and kings will be your offspring.
Conservapedia	I will make you fruitful to the highest degree. I will make several ethnic groups come from you. Kings will descend from you.
The Expanded Bible	I will ·give you many descendants [└cause you to be exceedingly fruitful; 1:22]. ·New nations will be born from you [└I will make nations of you], and kings will come from you.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And I will make you very fruitful, and I will make nations and kingdoms proceed from you.
NET Bible®	I will make you [tn This verb starts a series of perfect verbal forms with vav (?) consecutive to express God's intentions.] extremely [tn Heb "exceedingly, exceedingly." The repetition is emphatic.] fruitful. I will make nations of you, and

kings will descend from you [tn Heb "and I will make you into nations, and kings will come out from you."].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	I will cause you to be very fruitful. I will make nations of you, kings will descend from you.
exeGeses companion Bible	...and I give you to mighty mightily bear fruit and I give you to become a goyim; and sovereigns come from you:...
Judaica Press Complete T.	And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings will emerge from you.
Kaplan Translation	I will increase your numbers very, very much, and I will make you into nations - kings will be your descendants.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make Goyim of thee, and Melechim shall come out of thee.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And I will make you exceedingly fruitful and I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you [This prophecy and promise has been literally fulfilled countless times--for example, by all of the kings of Israel and Judah.].
Concordant Literal Version	And fruitful I cause you to be exceedingly exceedingly. And I make of you nations, and kings from you shall fare forth.
Heritage Bible	And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make peoples of you, and kings shall come out of you..
Modern KJV	And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, greatly so, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you.
Syndein	"Fruitful exceedingly . . . exceedingly fruitful, I {God} will give {to you for descendants}, and I will give nations {to you as descendants} . . . kings shall keep on coming {from your seed}." {Note: This kings will be Arabic kings and Jewish kings and so on. Many and many will keep on coming.}.
Young's Updated LT	And I have made you exceeding fruitful, and made you become nations, and kings go out from you.

The gist of this verse: God tells Abraham that He has made him extremely fruitful and that both nations and kings would come from him.

Genesis 17:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
pârâh (הָרָפ) [pronounced *paw-RAW*]	*to cause to become fruitful, to make fruitful; to increase with offspring*	1st person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #6509 (& #6500) BDB #826
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally *to, toward*	affixed to a 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 17:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning*	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
m^{e}ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^{e}-ODE*]	*exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547
m^{e}ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^{e}-ODE*]	*exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

Translation: And I have caused you to be exceedingly fruitful—extremely [fruitful]—... The doubled-adverb above has no good translation which I have seen. Although this occurs several times in the Old Testament, neither BDB nor Gesenius had good translations for such a construction. As you can see by the translations above, it is tough to translate this. You either have to be very literal, as the Concordant Literal Version is; or you have to do something else (for instance, I doubled up on the verb and used two synonyms to translate m^{e}ôd.

"I will make you exceedingly fruitful" (graphic) from the **eich MPCWA page**; accessed December 6, 2013.

You may have heard the English axiom, *do not split an infinitive*. If you are old enough and took grammar *and* paid attention, then you know what the means and you can see that I violated that rule above. The verb is *caused to be fruitful; to make fruitful*. However, we have the repeated adverb and the direct object to figure into this. For reasons I never really understood, because you *could not* split an infinitive in other languages (in the Hebrew, you cannot separate *caused* and *to be* and *fruitful* (as it is all one word), we decided that would be a bad thing to do grammatically, even though it is certainly possible to break up these words in the English. In any case, you have my permission to split infinitives all that you want (technically, that is separating *to* and *make fruitful*).

We have the perfect tense (an accomplished act or state) here because God is outside of time; therefore, to God, Abram has already been made extremely fruitful. This is a promise that has come to pass. It is a done deal. To Abram, this is to occur in the future. Right now, he has one son, and that was not necessarily a good idea.

Now, even if Abram had no more children, even this one son would become extremely fruitful (although we seem to lose track of what happens to the Ishmaelites after time passes).

Genesis 17:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*]	*to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make*	1st person singular, Qal perfect with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.			
gôwyîm (גּוֹיִם) [pronounced *goh-YIHM*]	*Gentiles, [Gentile] nations, people, peoples, nations*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

Translation: ...and I have made [transformed] you into nations... This second phrase was quite difficult to translate. In part, this is because of the lâmed preposition, which generally is rendered *to, for*. However, here it is used like the Greek preposition εις, and one thing is changed *into* something else. Abram will be changed or transformed into *nations*. Again, this is the perfect tense or accomplished action or state of being, because to God, the One speaking, this has already taken place. God is not confined to time. We live inside of time, so that it is difficult for us to perceive of the concept of being outside of time, but God is. So His promise to Abram has already been accomplished with regards to God. Many nations would eventually come out of Abram. Because translators cannot easily explain that God is outside of time when translating this into English, you will note that nearly every English translation has this verb in the future tense.

If you have looked at the Hebrew exegetical table, you can see that the verb *to make* is the very common verb nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means, *to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make*. Strong's #5414 BDB #678. Primarily, we find this verb translated *to give;* however, the transformative nature of the lâmed preposition and the object gôwyîm make *to make* a reasonable translation. Even *transformed* in this specific instance reasonably explains what God has promised Abram.

Abraham Bowing before God (a graphic); etched by Wenceslaus Hollar on the **Divine-name website**; accessed December 6, 2013. All of v. 6 reads: And I have already caused you to become extremely, exceedingly fruitful, and I have transformed you into nations, and kings will come out of you.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Genesis 17:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
melek^{e} (מֶלֶךְ:) [pronounced *MEH-lek*]	*king, ruler, prince*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
min (מִן) [pronounced *min*]	*from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than*	preposition of separation with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâtsâʾ (אָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*]	*to go out, to come out, to come [go] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out];* [of money:] *to be expended, laid out, spent; promulgated; outgoing [end of a time period]*	3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect pausal form	Strong's #3318 BDB #422

Translation: ...and kings will come from you. Even though Abram is well-known in the land of Canaan—particularly after Gen. 14—he is still a rancher and very much a nomad. In order for him to be a king, he would have to be in one place for a period of time. However, from Abram would come a number of kings. The entire Davidic line is descended from Abram. King Saul is descended from Abram.

Maybe you have noticed the change of the verb. The previous two verbs were both in the perfect tense, indicating a completed action or state of being; and yet, suddenly, we have the imperfect tense. Why the change? Well, if you were paying close attention, you will note that the subject of the verbs also changed. God was the subject of the first two verbs, so, insofar as God is concerned, this action has already been accomplished. What God was going to give Abram had been accomplished in eternity past. It is a done deal. So, when God is the subject, the verb is in the perfect tense to emphasize that this is a completed action insofar as God is concerned. However, the subject of the third verb is *kings*. Well, these kings don't exist yet in time; there existence is future from Abram. Therefore, an imperfect tense is used.

Gen 17:6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.

Although that is how most Bibles translate v. 6, here is a more literal rendering of it:

Gen 17:6 I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you.

The first two verbs, where God is the subject, are in the perfect tense—completed action. What God does is a completed action. However, the third verb is in the imperfect tense (continuous or future action) because God is no longer the subject of the verb. *Kings* is the subject of that verb. Abraham is in time and the kings who will come from him are also confined to time; therefore, in the future, there will be kings who will be descended from Abraham. So, if you understand God and His foreknowledge, then the tense of these verbs make perfect sense.

If Abram is the father of many nations, then many kings will be descended from him. All of the kings of Israel are descended from Abraham and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will rule over this earth, is descended from Abraham as well.

The repetition of exceedingly means that Abraham will not just be prolific, but that the number of his descendants will be such that he cannot imagine how many there would be. How many people in the past can point down the road 500 years and point out a mass of people who are undoubtedly their descendants? From Abram, we can even today point out descendant after descendant; and not only can we identify his physical descendants, but we can also identify his spiritual descendants. There is no one in history other than Isaac and Jacob where their ancestors can be so readily recognized.

This is often translated is one sentence, which is acceptable, but one loses the idea that there are three separate thoughts being transmitted.

- Abraham will become able to father children again; he will become fruitful or prolific in the extreme.
- From Abraham will come many nations; at least 7.
- From Abraham will come many kings; the leaders of these nations.

So far, we have studied the first 6 verses:

Gen 17:1–6 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, “Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations.” I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you.

Jehovah Elohim has renamed Abram (*father of high places, father of wind*) to *Abraham* (*father of the multitude*). God’s promise to Abraham is that He has decreed that Abraham will be a father of nations and that kings would come from him. One set of nations would be set in the land of Canaan, where Abraham is right now. This would first be called Israel, which would be ruled by Saul, David and then Solomon. All of these kings came from Abraham. Then Israel will break up into two nations, the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah), and they would be ruled by kings who all were descended from Abraham. Under the 4th Cycle of Discipline (the **4th Stage of Discipline**), the Jews would be ruled over by a series of other nations, during which time, these two nations would be known as Judæa and Samaria. In short, *Abraham* is a father of a multitude; he is a father of many; and we remember him today as *Abraham,* and not as *Abram*. God has made Abraham into nations and kings would be descended from him.

———————————

And I have established My covenant between Me and between you and between your seed after you for their generations for a covenant everlasting, to be to you for an Elohim and to your seed after you.	Genesis 17:7	**Furthermore [lit., *and*], I will establish My contract between Me and you, and [between Me] and your descendants after you, for an everlasting contract for their generations, to be Elohim to you and to your descendants after you.**

Therefore, I will establish My agreement between Me and you, as well as between Me and your descendants who live after you, which covenant will be an everlasting agreement for their generations, that I will be your God and I will be God to your descendants who live after you.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And I have established My covenant between My Word and you, and your sons after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your sons after you.
Latin Vulgate	And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and between your seed after you in their generations, by a perpetual covenant: to be a God to you, and to your seed after you.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And I have established My covenant between Me and between you and between your seed after you for their generations for a covenant everlasting, to be to you for an Elohim and to your seed after you.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, and I will be God to you and to your descendants after you.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I will establish My covenant between you and your seed after you, to their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be your God, and the God of your seed after you.
Significant differences:	As in the previous verse, the perfect tense in the Hebrew is translated as a future tense in the Greek, and, apparently, as a future tense in the Latin and Syriac. The covenant being established in the Targum is between *My Word* and you. The targum and Syriac appear to translate *seed* as *sons* or as *descendants,* which are both reasonable translations. The Syriac appears to translate the final verb as a 1st person, future, rather than as an infinitive. Also, although the English translation of the Greek above has *God* twice at the end of the verse, His title occurs only once in the Greek.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I will set up my covenant with you and your descendants after you in every generation as an enduring covenant. I will be your God and your descendants' God after you.
Contemporary English V.	I will always keep the promise I have made to you and your descendants, because I am your God and their God.
Easy English (Pocock)	I shall *confirm my *covenant between me and you. My *covenant with your *descendants will be a *covenant that will last for always. I shall be your God and I shall be your *descendants' God.

Easy-to-Read Version	And I will prepare an agreement between you and me. This agreement will also be for all your descendants. This agreement will continue forever. I will be your God and the God of all your descendants.
Good News Bible (TEV)	"I will keep my promise to you and to your descendants in future generations as an everlasting covenant. I will be your God and the God of your descendants.
The Message	I'm establishing my covenant between me and you, a covenant that includes your descendants, a covenant that goes on and on and on, a covenant that commits me to be your God and the God of your descendants.
New Berkeley Version	I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants in their successive generations for an everlasting covenant, tobe your God and your offspring's after you.
New Life Bible	I will make My agreement between Me and you and your children after you through their whole lives for all time. I will be God to you and to your children's children after you.
New Living Translation	"I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants [Hebrew seed; also in 17:7b, 8, 9, 10, 19.] after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'I will also extend my Sacred Agreement between you and Me to the seed that comes from you, through [all] its generations. It is a Sacred Agreement through the ages that [I] will be your God and the God of the seed that comes from you.
Ancient Roots Translinear	I *will* raise my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations as a covenant forever, to be God to you and your seed after you.
Beck's American Translation	I will keep My covenant with you and with your descendants after you in their ages—an everlasting covenant it will be. I will be your God and the God of your descendants.
Christian Community Bible	And I will establish a covenant, an everlasting covenant between myself and you and your descendants after you; from now on I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you, for generations to come..
God's Word™	I will make my promise to you and your descendants for generations to come as an everlasting promise. I will be your God and the God of your descendants.
New American Bible	I will maintain my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting covenant, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. Ps 105:42; Lk 1:72-73; Gal 3:16.
NIRV	"I will make my covenant with you. It will last forever. It will be between me and you and your children after you for all time to come. I will be your God. And I will be the God of all of your family after you.
New Jerusalem Bible	And I shall maintain my covenant between myself and you, and your descendants after you, generation after generation, as a covenant in perpetuity, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.
New Simplified Bible	»I will establish my covenant as a long lasting covenant between us. It will be for your descendants after you, for the generations to come. I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And I will make between me and you and your seed after you through all generations, an eternal agreement to be a God to you and to your seed after you.
Conservapedia	I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and your children after you-a covenant that will last forever throughout all their generations-to be a God for you and your children after you.

The Expanded Bible	And I will make an ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18] between me and you and all your ·descendants [└seed] ·from now on [or forever]: I will be your God and the God of all your descendants.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	I will also establish My Covenant between Myself and you, and with your descendants after you from generation to generation, for ever, to be a GOD to you and to your race after you.
NET Bible®	I will confirm [The verb קום (qum, “to arise, to stand up”) in the Hiphil verbal stem means “to confirm, to give effect to, to carry out” (i.e., a covenant or oath; see BDB 878-79 s.v. קום).] my covenant as a perpetual [tn Or "as an eternal."] covenant between me and you. It will extend to your descendants after you throughout their generations. I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you [tn Heb "to be to you for God and to your descendants after you."].
NIV – UK	I 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.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And I will establish My covenant between Me and between you and between your seed after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be to you for a God and to your seed after you.
Kaplan Translation	I will sustain My covenant between Me and between you and your descendants after you throughout their generations, an eternal covenant; I will be a God to you and to your offspring after you.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And I will establish My Brit (covenant) between Me and thee and thy zera after thee in their dorot for a Brit Olam, to be Elohim unto thee, and to thy zera after thee.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting, solemn pledge, to be a God to you and to your posterity after you.
Updated *Emphasized Bible*	And I will confirm my covenant betwixt me and you and your seed after you to their generations for an age-abiding covenant,—to become to you a God, and to your seed after you.
English Standard Version	And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.
Heritage Bible	And I will cause my covenant to rise between me and you, and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant to be God to you and to your seed after you..
NASB	I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [Lit seed] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.
Syndein	" And I {God} will cause to establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting { `owlam} covenant . . . to be 'Elohiym/Godhead unto you, and to your seed/descendents { zera`} after {'achar} {you}."
Young’s Updated LT	And I have established My covenant between Me and you, and your seed after you, to their generations, for a covenant age-during, to become God to you, and to your seed after you.

The gist of this verse: God establishes this covenant with Abraham and his descendants throughout the ages, but be his God and theirs.

I will break this verse up into bite-sized pieces, so I will occasionally insert some extra words in order to carry the meaning of the previous portion accurately.

Genesis 17:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*]	*to cause to raise up, to cause to stand, to establish, to fulfill; to uphold, to perform* [a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise]	1st person singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b^{e}rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #996 BDB #107
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #996 BDB #107

Translation: Furthermore [lit., *and*], I will establish My contract between Me and you,... The verb here means *to cause to raise up, to cause to stand, to establish, to fulfill; to uphold, to perform* [a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise]. This accounts for the several different English translations. Again, this is in the perfect tense, because God has done this, and when God does something, it has already occurred (even though, in time, it is future for Abram).

Will establish means, in the Hiphil form, *to raise up, constitute; to cause to stand, set, station, establish; to make binding; to carry out, give effect to*. *Descendants* is actually the singular of *seed,* but it may be reasonably translated *descendants*. This covenant or contract that God will establish will be with Abraham and with his descendants as well. Furthermore, this is an *everlasting* covenant. Since God is all-knowing, and because the future to Him is as perspicuous as the past, when God establishes a covenant with someone, He knows exactly what will happen throughout the centuries. The fact that many religious Jews rejected Jesus Christ at the **1st Advent** did not catch God by surprise. God does not and cannot cancel an everlasting covenant.

The verb *to establish,* is in the perfect tense, because, insofar as God is concerned, this is a completed action. God has already established His covenant between Himself and Abraham and between Himself and Abraham's descendants.

I have mentioned a Suzerain-Vassal treaty on sever occasions. This may be a good time to delve into it.

God first established a covenant with Noah in Gen. 6:18 9:9, 11–17; and He has established a covenant with Abram, beginning in Gen. 15:18. However, in this chapter, we have the word covenant repeated 13 times.

The Suzerain Vassal Treaty

1. In the Ancient Near East, treaties between kings was common. However, also common in that era were treaties between a superior and his inferior. If the relationship was familial or friendly, the parties are referred to as "father" and "son." If the relationship is bereft of kindness and intimacy, the parties are referred to as "lord" and "servant," or "king" and "vassal," or "greater king" and "lesser king." However, what is often established as a treaty would be between a king and another people, over whom he is clearly superior (he has a much larger army; he rules over a much greater population, etc.).
2. Such a king would establish a treaty between himself (the suzerain) and this inferior people (the vassals). Typically, the people would allow themselves to be taxed by this sovereign, and he would offer them protection.
3. These treaties were quite common in the ancient world, and wikipedia lists the essentials of **Hittite treaties**.
4. These Suzerain/Vassal treaties begin with two sections:
   1) The identification of the Suzerain by his name and titles;
   2) The historical survey of the Suzerain's dealings with the vassal. The purpose is to illustrate to the vassal how much the Suzerain has done to protect and establish the vassal who therefore owes submission and allegiance to the Suzerain. These two sections are referred to as the "Preamble."
5. The next section of these treaties list the "stipulations." What the vassal is required to do is spelled out in principal and detail. This section is often concluded with the requirement that the vassal deposit his copy of the treaty in his temple, where he is to occasionally read and study it to refresh his memory concerning his duties.
6. The last section of these treaties contains the blessings and curses of the Suzerain. If the stipulations are met by the vassal, he will receive the Suzerain's blessings, which are listed. If the vassal fails to meet the stipulations, he will receive the Suzerain's curses, which are also listed.
7. The Suzerain would keep one copy of the treaty and the vassal would keep one copy of the treaty. A number of ratifying ceremonies were used depending upon the era and culture. But the most widely used rite was that of cutting the bodies of animals in halves and placing them in two rows with enough space between for the two parties of the treaty to walk side by side. As they walked between the pieces, they were vowing to each other, "May what has happened to these animals, happen to me if I break this covenant with you."
8. This treaty, like any other treaty, was dependent upon the integrity of the people committed to the treaty.
9. When a people no longer cared for the agreement which they had made, often they would rebel, which was what we studied in Gen. 14.

Although this chapter is not, strictly speaking, given in the order above; it is similar, in some ways, to a Suzerain-Vassal treaty in content.

At the end of this chapter, we will take a look at this entire chapter and **match it up** with a Suzerain-vassal treaty.

Sources:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzerainty
http://www.fivesolas.com/suzerain.htm

For additional information:
http://guardianguideandstay.blogspot.com/2012/02/covenants-suzerain-vassal-land-grants.html
http://www.newlife-pca.com/files/womensbiblestudy/12P123JJ_What_Is_A_Covenant.pdf

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

So far, we have Furthermore [lit., *and*], I will establish My covenant between Me and you,... This identifies God and Abram as parties to this covenant (contract, agreement, treaty).

Genesis 17:7b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
zeraʿ (זֶרַע) [pronounced *ZEH-rahģ*]	*a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
ʾachar (אַחַר) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*]	*after, following, behind*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation: ...and [between Me] and your descendants after you,... The treaty which God is making also is between Himself and Abram's descendants (here, called *your seed*). We will allow the context to tell us whether God is speaking of Abram's Seed, as in Jesus Christ; or Abram's seed as in the Jewish race.

Right now, we have one Jew; and we have Sarai, who has married a man who will become a Jew.

Genesis 17:7c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dôwr (דּוֹר) [pronounced *dohr*]	*generation; race; people; age, period, time period [of a generation], a time slice*	masculine plural noun with the 3rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1755 BDB #189
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
b^{e}rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136

Genesis 17:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿôwlâm (עֹולָם) [pronounced *ģo-LAWM*]	properly *what is hidden [time]; of [in] times past, from ancient time, old, antiquity, long duration, forever, perpetuity; for future time, futurity; of the world, worldly*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Translation: ...for an everlasting contract for their generations,... The time period for this covenant is herein given. We occasionally write legislation in the United States, and it stands for two months or two years, at which time it is renegotiated. Often the most powerful party wants to renegotiate such an agreement when they believe it will give them an advantage.

Genesis 17:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.

Genesis 17:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾĔlôhîym (מִיהֹלֵא) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...to be Elohim to you... God tells Abram that He will be God to Abram. The idea here is, there will be a real relationship between God and Abram. There are a number of nations, all of which have their own gods and goddesses, and they have their own characteristics, their temples and often statues or idols. These are not God; these people have no relationship with God; and they will not be able to find or develop a relationship with God through these idols or temples. However, Abram will have an established relationship with God.

Genesis 17:7e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
zeraʿ (עֶרַז) [pronounced *ZEH-rahģ*]	*a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
ʾachar (רַחַא) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*]	*after, following, behind*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation: ...and to your descendants after you. God also herein promises to be God to Abram's descendants who come after him. God will also remain God to Abram's descendants. The idea is, God will always be there, available to the Jews; and they will either respond to Him or they won't. So, we have periods of time when Israel is very much in synch with God and we have periods of time when Israel is in rebellion with God.

Gen 17:7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you.

Because *seed* is in the singular, this promise applies to Isaac, Abraham's son who is yet to be born; and it applies to *Jesus,* Who is also the Son of Abraham. Paul will make this point in Gal. 3:16: And to Abraham and to his Seed the promises were spoken. It does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, "And to your Seed," which is Christ. So, this is specifically applied to Jesus Christ. God's covenant with Jesus Christ is the end product with this covenant.

The One speaking to Abraham is the 2nd Person of the Trinity and this contract is being made with Himself, Who will become confined to time as the God-man.

At the same time, the singular of *seed* is used in such a way as to refer to all of Abram's born-again descendants. This is clear in the next verse:

Quotations come from the ESV, which has had its pronouns referring to Deity capitalized. everlasting covenant from the ESV.

God's Everlasting Covenant	
Scripture	**Text/Commentary**
Gen. 9:16–17 [God is speaking to Noah]	"When the [rain] bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the **everlasting covenant** between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth." This covenant is that God would never again destroy all humanity with a flood. At this point in time, it is impossible to cover the entire earth with water; however, **a completely flat earth[9] would be about 8000 ft. under water**. There are non-creationist scientists who believe that the earth was once **covered with water**. And there certainly is **evidence** for a worldwide flood.
Gen. 17:5–7 [God is speaking to Abraham]	"No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an **everlasting covenant**, to be God to you and to your offspring after you." This covenant would stand for the ages.
Gen. 17:11–13 [God is speaking to Abraham]	"You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 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, 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**."
Gen. 17:18–20	And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" 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. 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." God also will establish a covenant with Ishmael; but His everlasting covenant is with Isaac.
1Chron. 16:15–18	King David, making a dedication to the Ark which he had just had moved into Jerusalem: "Remember His covenant forever, the word that He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that He made with Abraham, His sworn promise to Isaac, which He confirmed as a statute to Jacob, as an **everlasting covenant** to Israel, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan, as your portion for an inheritance." (Paraphrasing Gen. 17:8).
Psalm 105:9–11	He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an **everlasting covenant**, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance." These are the words exactly from 1Chron. 16.

[9] I mean by *flat earth,* an earth without mountains.

God's Everlasting Covenant	
Scripture	**Text/Commentary**
2Sam. 23:5	These are a portion of David's last words: "For does not my house stand so with God? For He has made with me an **everlasting covenant**, ordered in all things and secure. For will He not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?" God also made a covenant with David, something which David marveled at.
Isa. 24:1–5	Behold, Jehovah empties the land and makes it bare, and distorts its face, and scatters its inhabitants. And as it is with the people, so it shall be with the priest; as with the servant, so with the master; as with the handmaid, so it is with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The land shall be completely emptied, and utterly stripped; for Jehovah has spoken this Word. The earth mourns and languishes; the world droops and languishes; the proud people of the earth droop. And the land is defiled under its people; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and have broken the **everlasting covenant**. (MKJV[10]) This passage describes the Land of Promise when under God's discipline.
Isa. 55:1–9	God's message to the people of Israel: "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to Me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an **everlasting covenant**, My steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified you. "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."
Isa. 61:5–9	God speaking to the people of Israel: "Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; but you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy. For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an **everlasting covenant** with them. Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed." God warns Israel that He will make an everlasting covenant with another people.

[10] Because they used the word *land* rather than *earth*.

God's Everlasting Covenant	
Scripture	**Text/Commentary**
Jer. 32:37–41	God speaking of regathering Israel from the countries where He scattered them: "Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in My anger and My wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be My people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an **everlasting covenant**, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of Me in their hearts, that they may not turn from Me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all My soul." Even after subjecting Israel to great discipline, God desires to make an everlasting covenant with them.
Jer. 50:4–6	God speaks of His forgiveness to Israel: "In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come, and they shall seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, 'Come, let us join ourselves to the LORD in an **everlasting covenant** that will never be forgotten.' My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold."
Ezek. 16:59–63	Despite all of Israel's evil, God will establish His covenant with them: For thus says the Lord GOD: "I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, yet I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an **everlasting covenant**. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD, that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord GOD."
Ezek. 37:24–28	God speaking of the restoration of Israel in the future: "My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in My rules and be careful to obey My statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to My servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David My servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an **everlasting covenant** with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."
It is difficult to read all of these passages and believe that God has completely abandoned Israel.	

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

And I have given to you and to your seed after you a land of your sojourns, all land of Canaan for a possession of perpetuity; and I have been to them for an Elohim."	Genesis 17:8	**Furthermore, I have given to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your [present] residence—all the land of Canaan—for a permanent possession. And I will be Elohim to them."**

Furthermore, I have given both to your and to your descendants after you the land where you presently reside—in fact, all the land of Canaan—and it will be your permanent possession. And I will be the God of your descendants."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And I will give to you and to your sons after you the land of your habitation, all the land of Kenaan, for an everlasting possession: and I will be to them Eloha.
Latin Vulgate	And I will give to you, and to your seed, the land of your sojournment, all the land of Chanaan, for a perpetual possession, and I will be their God.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And I have given to you and to your seed after you a land of your sojourns, all land of Canaan for a possession of perpetuity; and I have been to them for an Elohim."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And I will give to you, and your descendants after you, the land in which you sojourn, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting inheritance; and I will be their God.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I will give to you and to your seed after you the land in which you sojourn, even all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be to them a God.
Significant differences:	As discussed earlier, the perfect tense verbs in the Hebrew are translated into future tenses in most other languages, even though the perfect tense indicates a completed state or act. The promise is made to Abram and to his seed, called *sons* in the targum and *descendants* in the Syriac (this is based upon the English translation in both cases).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I will give you and your descendants the land in which you are immigrants, the whole land of Canaan, as an enduring possession. And I will be their God."
Contemporary English V.	I will give you and them the land in which you are now a foreigner. I will give the whole land of Canaan to your family forever, and I will be their God.
Easy-to-Read Version	And I will give this land to you and to all your descendants. I will give you the land you are traveling through—the land of Canaan. I will give you this land forever. And I will be your God."
Good News Bible (TEV)	I will give to you and to your descendants this land in which you are now a foreigner. The whole land of Canaan will belong to your descendants forever, and I will be their God."
The Message	And I'm giving you and your descendants this land where you're now just camping, this whole country of Canaan, to own forever. And I'll be their God."
New Berkeley Version	To you and to your descendants after you I will give the country to which you have migrated — the whole Canaanite country —for an everlasting possession; I will be their God.
New Century Version	You live in the land of Canaan now as a stranger, but I will give you and your descendants all this land forever. And I will be the God of your descendants."
New Life Bible	I will give to you and your children after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan for yourselves forever. And I will be their God."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Also, I will give the land where you are [now] living as an alien, to you and to your seed. This includes the entire land of CanaAn. It will become yours through the ages, and I will be a God to them.'
Ancient Roots Translinear	I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land of your pilgrimage forever: all the land of Canaan. I will be their God.
Beck's American Translation	I give you and your descendants this land you're living in as a stranger: all Canaan is to belong to them forever. And I will be their God.
Christian Community Bible	I will give to you and your descend - ants after you the land you are living in, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession and I will be the God of your race."
God's Word™	I am also giving this land where you are living-all of Canaan-to you and your descendants as your permanent possession. And I will be your God."
New American Bible	I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land in which you are now residing as aliens, the whole land of Canaan, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God. Ex 32:13; Dt 1:8; 14:2; Lk 1:55; Acts 7:5.
NIRV	"You are now living in Canaan as an outsider. But I will give you the whole land of Canaan. You will own it forever. So will your children after you. And I will be their God."
New Jerusalem Bible	And to you and to your descendants after you, I shall give the country where you are now immigrants, the entire land of Canaan, to own in perpetuity. And I shall be their God.'
New Simplified Bible	»The whole land of Canaan, where you are now a guest (alien) (foreigner) (stranger), I will give a long lasting possession to you and your descendants after you. I will be their God.«
Revised English Bible	As a possession for all time I shall give you and your descendants after you the land in which you now are aliens, the whole of Canaan and I shall be their God.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And to you and to your seed after you, I will give the land in which you are living, all the land of Canaan for an eternal heritage; and I will be their God.
Conservapedia	I will give you, and your children after you, the land in which you are now a foreigner, all the land of Canaan, as their property forever, and I will be their God."
The Expanded Bible	You live in the land of Canaan now as a ·stranger [sojourner; wanderer; resident alien], but I will give you and your ·descendants [└seed] all this land ·forever [└as a permanent possession]. And I will be the God of your ·descendants [└seed]."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	I will also give to you and your race this country where you are a foreigner, the whole land of Canaan for a possession for ever, and I will be their GOD."
HCSB	And to you and your offspring after you I will give the land where you are residing--all the land of Canaan--as an eternal possession, and I will be their God."
New Advent Bible	And I will give to you, and to your seed, the land of your sojournment, all the land of Chanaan, for a perpetual possession, and I will be their God.
NET Bible®	I will give the whole land of Canaan — the land where you are now residing [The verbal root is גּוּר (gur, "to sojourn, to reside temporarily," i.e., as a resident alien). It is the land in which Abram resides, but does not yet possess as his very own.]— to you and your descendants after you as a permanent [tn Or "as an eternal."] possession. I will be their God."
NIV – UK	The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Kaplan Translation	To you and your offspring I will give the land where you are now living as a foreigner. The whole land of Canaan shall be [your] eternal heritage, and I will be a God to [your descendants].'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And I will give unto thee, and to thy zera after thee, the Eretz wherein thou art now a ger, kol Eretz Kena'an, for an Achuzzah (Possession) Olam (Everlasting); and I will be their Elohim.
The Scriptures 1998	“And I shall give to you and your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Kenaʿan, as an everlasting possession. And I shall be their Elohim.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And I will give to you and to your posterity after you the land in which you are a stranger [going from place to place], all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.
Concordant Literal Version	And I give to you and to your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for a holding eonian. And I become their Elohim.
English Standard Version	And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."
Heritage Bible	And I will give to you and to your seed after you the land of your temporary residence, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God..
Modern KJV	And I will give the land to you in which you are a stranger, and to your seed after you, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. And I will be their God.
New RSV	And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God.
A Voice in the Wilderness	Also I have given unto you and your seed after you the land in which you sojourn, all the land of Canaan, as an enduring possession; and I will be their God.
World English Bible	I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land where you are traveling, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. I will be their God."
Young’s Updated LT	And I have given to you, and to your seed after you, the land of your sojournings, the whole land of Canaan, for a possession age-during, and I have become their God.”

The gist of this verse: God gives all the land of Canaan, where Abraham resides, to him and to his descendants for an everlasting possession; and He will be the God of Abraham’s descendants.

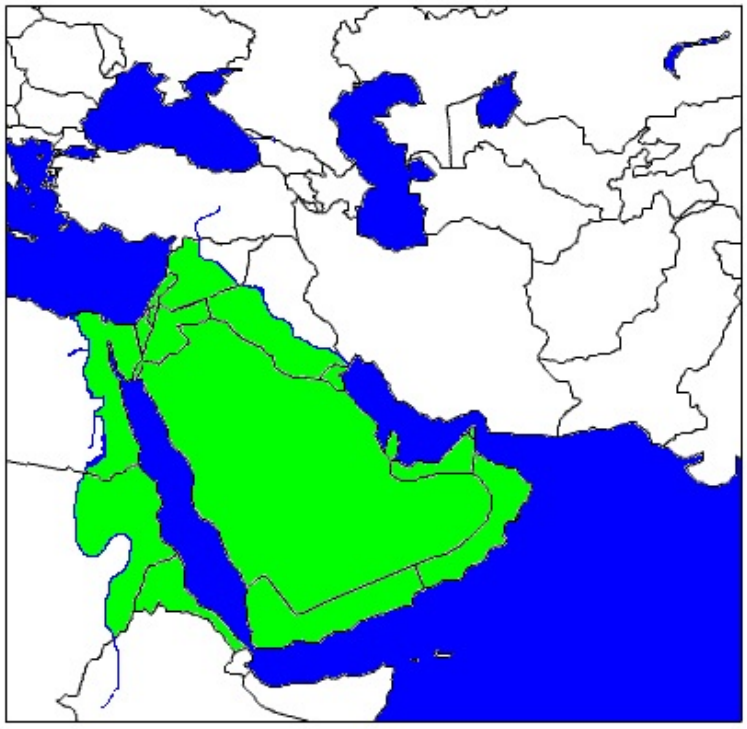
Genesis 17:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*]	*to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make*	1st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong’s # BDB #510
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251

Genesis 17:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
zeraʿ (עֶרֶז) [pronounced *ZEH-rahģ*]	*a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
ʾachar (רַחַא) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*]	*after, following, behind*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾerets (ץֶרֶא) [pronounced *EH-rets*]	*earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
mâgûwr (רוּגָמ) [pronounced *maw-GOOR*]	*sojourning, sojourning-place; residing, residence, dwelling-place, dwelling, abode;* possibly *travels, traveling*	masculine plural noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4033 BDB #158

Translation: Furthermore, I have given to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your [present] residence... The extent of this land has been described in previous chapters, such as Gen. 15:18–21 In the same day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, I have given this land to your seed [descendants], from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the giants, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. There, the land was given both by geographical markers as well as based upon which people live in this land mass.



From **http://www.achorian.com/graphics/FutureIsrael.gif**

A Map of What God Has Given the Jews. From **Achorian.com**, accessed December 2, 2013. This huge land mass has never been owned by them completely at any time in their history. As you can see, it goes from the Nile all the way to the River Euphrates and includes portions of Egypt, all of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, most of Iraq and Yemen. They will not receive all of this land until the Millennium.

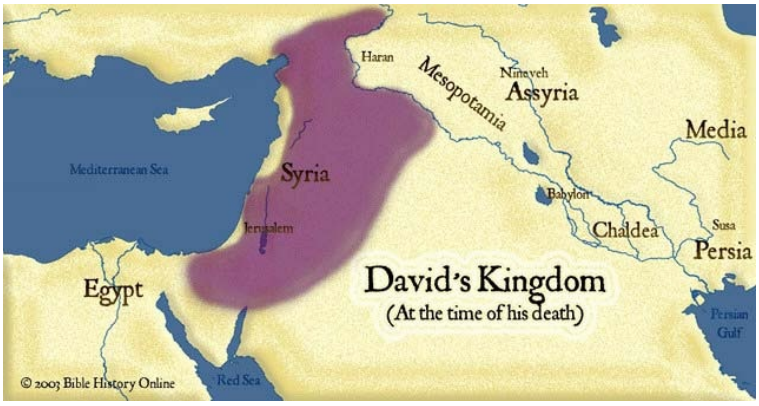
Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God has promised Abraham again the land where he has resided as a transient. This land belongs to the Canaanites and Abraham has been wandering throughout this land in a tent, with a large company of men and women and children. He does not own any of this land; it has been taken by the Canaanites who have inhabited this land since Gen. 11. They lived in the land as squatters, essentially, except that there was no one to take the land from, other than a few other previous squatters. We did see some struggle for this real estate back in Gen. 14, indicating that at that time it was probably a very prime piece of real estate, certainly not as covered with deserts then as it is today. However, it is still an object which nations battle over even today. God has given that piece of real estate to the Jews; to Abram's descendants.

Genesis 17:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kohl*]	*every, each, all of, all; any of, any*	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*]	*earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
K^{e}naʿan (כְּנַעַן) [pronounced *k^{e}NAH-ġahn*]	which possibly means *merchant* and is transliterated *Canaan*	masculine proper noun; territory	Strong's #3667 BDB #488

Translation:...—all the land of Canaan—... What land is clearly given to Abram and to his descendants is the land of Canaan, which may be seen as the land controlled by David at the height of his reign.



A Map of the Davidic Kingdom; from **bible-history.com**; accessed December 2, 2013. The kingdom shown off to the right is the land that David both occupied, controlled and conquered. It includes his spheres of influence, which was great.

http://www.bible-history.com/map-davids-kingdom/davids-kingdom.jpg

The land which Israel occupies today is much smaller.

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 17:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾăchûzzâh (אֲחֻזָּה) [pronounced *uh-khooz-ZAW*]	*possession [of land, slaves, etc.], land possession; inheritance*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #272 BDB #28
ʿôwlâm (עֹולָם) [pronounced *ǵo-LAWM*]	properly *what is hidden [time]; of [in] times past, from ancient time, old, antiquity, long duration, forever, perpetuity; for future time, futurity; of the world, worldly*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Translation: ...for a permanent possession. Although God gives the land of Canaan to Israel, there will be times throughout history—particularly during the Church Age—when they do not live in this land. During the Age of Israel, Jews will live in this land, apart from the times that they have been removed under the principle of the 5th stage of national discipline (these stages will be taught in Lev. 26). However, these stages of national discipline are taught **here** and **here**.

Genesis 17:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	1st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition with the 3rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 17:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.			
ʾĔlôhîym (מִיהֹלֵא) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: And I will be Elohim to them." These words indicate a relationship between God and those to whom this promise is being made. If the One speaking to Abram—Y^{e}howah—is their God, then they have believed in Him and they partake of the covenant made with Him.

Then we have that amazing statement: "I will be their God." No other nation or group of people has ever had such a statement made of them and perhaps this has caused some of the anti-Semitism. People cannot stand exclusivity. So many people who I have witnessed to do not like that God has established but one way to be saved; that each different religion isn't just basically right for the culture from which it originated. We want to believe that if each man worships God in his own way, that God will be just too thrilled with this man's sincerity and earnestness not to take them into heaven. So wouldn't it be natural for some people, the old sin nature being what it is, to despise the fact that God has come to a particular people to be their God?

Throughout the greater portion of the Bible, from Gen. 12 on through the entirety of the Old Testament on through to the middle of the gospels and then picking back up in Rev. 4, we have God dealing primarily with and through the nation Israel. He chose them from the foundation of the world and for much of human history had an exclusive relationship with the nation Israel. Even the church for many centuries tried to denigrate this relationship with covenant theology. The basic philosophy was that the church began in Abraham's tent and that true Israel is essentially equivalent to the church. How can anyone read past Genesis in the Old Testament and come up with this sort of conclusion? True Israel and the **true** church (those who have believed in Jesus Christ) are saved and have that in common and could be called spiritual brothers. However, we are not equivalent and the programs which God has set up on our behalf are not equivalent. Here are where cults become confused: they cannot differentiate between the Old and New Testaments; they cannot see a clear difference between the church and Israel. These are two separate entities with different expectations and slightly different relationships. Because someone has not had correct teaching with regard to the church and Israel, the influential leader of a cult originally goes off on the deep end, failing to make this distinction on his (or her) own. All it takes is some initial disorientation, and then coming across the verse "There still remains a Sabbath" and we have instance misapplication and confusion which is passed down to the dupes of the charismatic leader.

See the chart **Israel and the church**. It is with something as this chart that one becomes grounded and can make the fine distinctions which we have to make in Scripture (Heb. 4:12). As a young Christian, without the careful guidance of Bob Thieme and the excellent *Scofield Reference Bible*, I would have never made the correct distinctions no matter how many years that I studied. God has made it possible for us to differentiate, but we must get with His program, which, in the church age, is under the careful teaching of a well-trained pastor who uses ICE principles (isagogics, categories and exegesis).

What is humorous (in a tragic way) is that we continually find cults and various *Christian* religions which try to get us to live in a manner similar to Israel, but rarely do they emphasize circumcision or militarily taking over the land of Palestine or the execution of disobedient teenagers (although the last point definitely has merit, particularly in a degenerate society such as the one we find ourselves in).

Comparing and Contrasting Israel and the Church	
Israel	**The Church**
Israel is a nation chosen by God and sustained by covenant promises (Deut. 7:6-9). Not all individuals in this chosen nation are saved (Rom. 9:6; 11:28).	The Church is a called out assembly of believers who have been baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Every member of the body of Christ is saved, though there are multitudes of professing Christians who may not be saved (2 Tim. 2:19).
Israel traces its origin to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Jacob being the father of the twelve tribes).	The Church traces its origin to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when believers were first placed into the body of Christ.
In God's program for Israel, His witnesses comprised a nation (Isaiah 43:10).	In God's program for the Church, His witnesses are among all nations (Acts 1:8).
God's program for Israel **centered** in Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37) and will again center in Jerusalem during the Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-20) and during the Millennium (Isa. 2:1-5).	God's program for His Church **began** in Jerusalem and extended to the uttermost parts of the earth (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The Church is identified with the risen Christ, not with any earthly city.
The hope and expectancy of Israel was earthly, centering in the establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah foretold by the prophets (Jer. 23:5-8; Isa. 2:1-5; 11:1-16).	The hope and expectancy of the Church is heavenly, centering in the glorious appearing of Christ to take His people to heaven (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
God's purpose and program for Israel was revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures.	God's purpose and program for the Church was not revealed in the Old Testament, but was revealed by the New Testament apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:5).
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 70 weeks or 490 years) involved animal sacrifices. These years will include the tribulation. Israel's millennial history will involve the same (Ezek. 43:27).	The Church's history does not involve animal sacrifices. Messiah's sacrifice is commemorated by means of the Lord's Table.
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 490 years including also the Tribulation) involves a temple in Jerusalem. The same will be true in the Millennium (Ezek. chapters 40-48).	During most of the Church age there is no Jewish temple in Jerusalem. In this age God manifests His glory in His believers, both individually and collectively, designating them as His temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:21-22). This is accomplished by the indwelling ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Comparing and Contrasting Israel and the Church	
Israel	**The Church**
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 490 years) involves a priesthood limited to the sons of Aaron, and excluding most Israelites. The same applies to the Millennium when Zadokian priests (also sons of Aaron) will serve in the temple (Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:15).	During the Church age every true believer is a priest and able to offer spiritual sacrifices to the Lord (Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). Whereas Israel had a priesthood, the Church *is* a priesthood.
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 490 years) will terminate with the coming of the Messiah to the earth to establish His Kingdom reign.	The Church's history will end at the Rapture of the Church when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rom. 11:25).
During Israel's history (the 490 years of Daniel 9:24 which also includes the Tribulation) the ethnic makeup of the world is bipartite: Jews and Gentiles. This division of all people into Jews and Gentiles will also apply to those in the Millennial Kingdom in natural bodies.	During the Church age from Pentecost to the Rapture the ethnic makeup of the world is tripartite: Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32), the Church being composed of saved Jews and Gentiles united together in one Body (Eph. 2:15; 3:6),
During Israel's history, from Sinai to the Millennial Kingdom (excluding the Church age), Israel's role in the world will be characterized by PRIORITY [that is, they will have a leading role as God's chosen people]""see Deut. 4:6-8; Isa. 43:10; Matt. 10:5-6; Zech. 8:23.	During the Church age, Israel's role in the world will be characterized by EQUALITY""Jew and Gentiles united together in one body to bear testimony to a risen Christ (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28).
Male Jews were circumcised as a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. Believing Jews were circumcised in the heart (Jer. 4:4).	Believers of this age enjoy an internal circumcision not made with hands (Col. 2:11; Phil. 3:3). Physical circumcision is not required.
Israel was under the law of Moses as a rule of life.	The Church is under the "new creature" rule (Gal. 6:15-16).
Unbelieving Jews were physical children of Abraham and spiritual children of the devil (John 8:37-44).	Every believer in Christ (every true member of the Church, whether Jew or Gentile) is a child of Abraham and a child of God (Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:326-29). This statement does **not** mean that Church age believers are Israelites.
Israel was to observe the Sabbath Day (Exodus 20:8). Sabbath observance will also take place in the Tribulation (Matt. 24:20) and in the Millennium (Ezek. 46:1,3).	The Church is to be diligent and make every effort to enter into God's rest (Heb. 4:9-11). This is a daily duty.
Membership into the Jewish nation was by birth or by becoming a proselyte (a convert to Judaism).	Membership into the Church is by the new birth accomplished by the baptizing ministry of God (1 Cor. 12:13).
Believing Jews prior to Pentecost, believing Jews during the tribulation, and believing Jews during the Kingdom reign of Christ are not members of the body of Christ.	Believing Jews and Gentiles from Pentecost to the Rapture are members of the body of Christ.

Comparing and Contrasting Israel and the Church	
Israel	**The Church**
Israel's place of worship centered in Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10; John 4:20) and this will also be true in the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27) and in the Millennium (Isa. 2:1-5).	The Church's place of worship is "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name" (Matt. 18:20; John 4:21-24). Christ is in the midst of His Churches (Rev. 1:13, 20).
Israel is likened to the wife of Jehovah, often an unfaithful wife (Hosea).	The Church is the beloved Bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-8) to be one day presented blameless and spotless (Eph. 5:27).
I have not gone through to check this entire chart yet; but, for the most part, it appears to be accurate. However, there are serious problems with the website that this came from. From: **http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org/dispen/israelch.htm**	

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

The land which Abraham is walking through will be given to the Jews for an everlasting possession. God had already told Abraham to walk throughout this land, so that Abraham could appreciate what was being given to him. "Come, walk through all the land from one end to the other for I will give it to you." (Gen. 13:17).

God has already specified the boundaries of this land back in Gen. 15:18–21 In the same day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, I have given this land to your seed [descendants], from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the giants, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. This is a huge swath of land.

Although God gives the land of Canaan to Israel, there will be times throughout history—particularly during the Church Age—when they do not live in this land. During the Age of Israel, Jews will live in this land, apart from the times that they have been removed under the principle of the **5th stage of national discipline** (these stages will be taught in Lev. 26). However, these stages of national discipline are taught **here** and **here**.

I mentioned that the covenant here is between God and those who are born again from Abraham's seed. We find this at the end of v. 8, where God says, "And I have been to them God." *Jehovah* (or, *Y*e*howah*), Who is speaking to Abraham, is not the God of the Muslims; He is not the God of those trying to keep the Law and the Sabbath for salvation; but He is God to those who believe in Him; and He is known to us today as *Jesus Christ*. For those who have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:1–18), the same have Ye howah as their God.

This does not mean that the land of Palestine has been transferred over to Church Age believers. God gives this to *Abraham and his descendants;* the land is *an eternal possession;* and the One speaking to Abraham is their God as well.

This possession is forever. The Hebrew word is ʿôwlâm (עֹולָם) [pronounced *ģo-LAWM*], which means *what is hidden [time]; of [in] times past, from ancient time, old, antiquity, long duration, forever, perpetuity; for future time, futurity; of the world, worldly*. Strong's #5769 BDB #761. As you can see, this word not only means *forever, in perpetuity;* but it is tied very specifically to this world. As long as there is a world, this promise stands.

———————————

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

God Requires Abraham to Circumcise All the Males to Confirm the Covenant

And says Elohim unto Abraham, "And you, My covenant you will keep—you and your seed after you to generations.	Genesis 17:9	**And Elohim said to Abraham, "You will keep My contract—you and your descendants after you for generations.**

And God said to Abraham, "You will keep My agreement—you and your descendants in perpetuity.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said to Abraham, And you will observe my covenant, you and your sons after you in their generations.
Latin Vulgate	Again God said to Abraham: And you therefore will keep my covenant, and your seed after you in their generation.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And says Elohim unto Abraham, "And you, My covenant you will keep—you and your seed after you to generations.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And God said to Abraham, You shall keep my covenant, you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God said to Abraham, You also shall fully keep My covenant, you and your seed after you for their generations.
Significant differences:	What God says begins with an *and;* this is not found in the Greek and appears to be missing in the Syriac as well. You will note that, again, instead of *seed,* we have *sons* in the targum and *descendants* in the Syriac (in the English translations of them). The final preposition is different in the targum, the Latin and the Syriac (note that it is underlined above).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants in every generation.
Contemporary English V.	Abraham, you and all future members of your family must promise to obey me.
Easy English (Pocock)	**Circumcision, 17:9-14** Then God said this to Abraham: `Now, you must obey my *covenant. And your *descendants too, who will come after you, must obey it for all their lives.
Easy-to-Read Version	And God said to Abraham, "Now, this is your part of the agreement. You and all your descendants [descendant(s) A person's children and their future families.] will obey my agreement.
Good News Bible (TEV)	God said to Abraham, "You also must agree to keep the covenant with me, both you and your descendants in future generations.
New Berkeley Version	Therefore, God said to Abraham: You must keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you in their respective generations...
New Century Version	Then God said to Abraham, "You and your descendants must keep this agreement from now on.
New Living Translation	**The Mark of the Covenant** Then God said to Abraham, "Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Then God told AbraHam: 'You must fully keep my Sacred Agreement. both you and your seed that descends from you, through all their generations.

Christian Community Bible	God said to Abraham, “For your part, you shall keep my cove - nant, you and your descendants after you, generation after generation..
God’s Word™	God also said to Abraham, "You and your descendants in generations to come are to be faithful to my promise.
New American Bible	God said to Abraham: For your part, you and your descendants after you must keep my covenant throughout the ages.
NIRV	Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant. You and your children after you for all time to come must keep it.
New Jerusalem Bible	God further said to Abraham, 'You for your part must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, generation after generation.
Revised English Bible	God said to Abraham, ‘For your part, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, generation by generation.
Today’s NIV	Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And God said to Abraham, On your side, you are to keep the agreement, you and your seed after you through all generations.
Conservapedia	And God told Abraham, "Therefore you will keep My covenant, you and your children after you throughout their generations.
The Expanded Bible	Then God said to Abraham, "You and your ·descendants [seed] must ·keep [obey; guard] this ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18] ·from now on [└throughout their generations].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	GOD also repeated to Abraham, “Now this is the Covenant which you shall keep, as well as your race after you;...
HCSB	God also said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations are to keep My covenant.
NET Bible®	Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep [tn The imperfect tense could be translated "you shall keep" as a binding command; but the obligatory nuance ("must") captures the binding sense better.] the covenantal requirement [Heb “my covenant.” The Hebrew word תִּיבְרִ (bÿrit) can refer to (1) the agreement itself between two parties (see v. 7), (2) the promise made by one party to another (see vv. 2-3, 7), (3) an obligation placed by one party on another, or (4) a reminder of the agreement. In vv. 9-10 the word refers to a covenantal obligation which God gives to Abraham and his descendants.] I am imposing on you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.
NIV – UK	Then God said to Abraham, As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Kaplan Translation	God [then] said to Abraham, 'As far as you are concerned, you must keep My covenant - you and your offspring throughout their generations.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Elohim said unto Avraham, Thou shalt be shomer over My Brit therefore, thou, and thy zera after thee in the dorot.
The Scriptures 1998	And Elohim said to Abraham, “As for you, guard My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is the Elohim to Abraham, "And you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you for their generations.

English Standard Version	And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.
Heritage Bible	And God said to Abraham, You shall hedge about my covenant, you and your seed after you in their generations..
Syndein	Abram's Response to the Word} 9^~'Elohiym/Godhead said {'amar} unto Abraham, "Keep on guarding/protecting/observing {shamar} My covenant, {and} your seed after in [their/his] generation(s)/"period of time". [Note: "Seed" is one of those words that is singular but is used often for plural things. Paul reveals to us in Galatians and Romans that here was mystery. The "seed" was singluar. It was God's promise to Abraham and his Seed - Who turned out to be Jesus Christ.].
Young's Updated LT	And God says unto Abraham, "And you will keep My covenant, you and your seed after you, to their generations.

The gist of this verse: For the first time, God is going to tell Abraham what he will do; and what must be done in generations to follow.

Genesis 17:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*]	*to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾĔlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced *ehl*]	*unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to*	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: And Elohim said to Abraham,... I do not know why suddenly we are told, *And Elohim said to Abraham;* this would suggest perhaps the Abraham had a few things to say, which were not recorded in the text here. In other words, Abraham really had nothing to add here to the contract that God was making with him.

Genesis 17:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וֱ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 17:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾattâh (הָתַּא) [pronounced *aht-TAW*]	*you* (often, the verb *to be* is implied)	2nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
ʾêth (תֵא) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b^{e}rîyth (תִיִרְב) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
shâmar (רַמָש) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*]	*to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve*	2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036

Translation:..."You will keep My contract—... God tells Abraham that he would keep God's contract. The verb *to keep* generally means *to guard, to protect, to watch over, to preserve*. So, it will become obvious that Abraham will obey what God says in this contract; but Abraham is told to preserve these words, suggesting that Abraham write them down.

Again, since it says, And Elohim said to Abraham—despite the fact that God has been talking prior to this—God is essentially telling Abraham, *write this down; make sure this information is preserved forever*. So Abraham may have had some things to say, but God ignored him, and began to speak again, saying, "Write this down." Even though this is not the word for *to write, to engrave;* these words can only be preserved if Abraham commits them to memory and/or writes them down for generations to come.

Application: The words in the Bible are not enough. God wants Bible doctrine to be engraved on our souls. That is the only way that we may *keep* His Word.

V. 9 is one of the few times there is a responsibility laid upon Abraham with regards to this covenant with God. When God spoke to Abraham before, the covenants which He made with Abraham were unconditional covenants, meaning, God was going to fulfill those promises to Abraham and his seed no matter what. However, this time, God tells Abraham, "You will keep My covenant." Furthermore, Abraham's seed would keep this covenant as well.

The verb here is the Qal imperfect of shâmar (רַמָש) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] and it means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. This is a very common verb and the emphasis is not as much on *obedience* as on *preservation*. And what the Jews did for hundreds of years, for over 3 millennia prior to the printing press, is preserve the Word of God, which contains His covenants to Abraham and to the Jews in general.

At first, the Old Testament was preserved in all consonants and by its being read to the people. And then, because they would not pronounce the name *Y^{e}howah* aloud, they realized that they had lost its true pronunciation, which was not preserved in Scripture, because they recorded only consonants. They knew what it said because they read, re-read and studied these words. However, their language was changing, and the Bible was in danger of becoming just a list of consonants that no one understood. Then they had the brilliant idea of adding vowel points. The Jews understood the value of the manuscripts that they had been preserving; they understood this to be the Word of God. They could not just fix the manuscripts by simply adding vowels into the mix, so they developed a set of vowel points, which were dots, and squiggles and short lines, placed above and below and, sometimes, in the midst of the consonants, so that the consonants remained unchanged. In fact, if you mentally blocked out all of these vowel points or covered up what is above and below the consonants, you would read the Word of God exactly as it had been recorded hundreds of years ago. So:

רמשתיתירבתא (My cvnt y wll kp) became רְמָשְׁתִיתִיְהְבֶ֣תָּא (My covenant you will keep)

In this way, the scribes brilliantly preserved the words of God, just exactly how they were written originally, but added in the vowels in such a way that, they did not change the text but so that subsequent generations would know how to pronounce these words. This pointing occurred sometime between the 5th and 10th centuries A.D.[11]

The preservation of God's Word, entrusted to the Jews, is certainly something to behold. In the late 1700's, two separate lists of known Hebrew manuscripts were made, one listing 615 and the other 731. Since then, there was a discovery of some 200,000 Hebrew manuscripts in Old Cairo, Egypt (called Cairo Genipa), 10,000 of which are Biblical. These manuscripts reflect a full millennium of time (from 870–1880).

I have mentioned the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery in previous lessons, which takes us back to a pre-Christian era, around 100 B.C. As a result of these and other discoveries, today, we know of tens of thousands of Old Testament manuscripts (these are not complete manuscripts, but books and fragments of books). We do have a handful of complete Masoretic manuscripts as well. So, the Hebrews devoted themselves to preserving God's Word, as did many other groups of people. Apart from the New Testament, no other writing has been so well-preserved.

What we have by way of manuscripts testifies to the accuracy of the text of the Bible.

Genesis 17:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced *aht-TAW*]	*you* (often, the verb *to be* is implied)	2nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
zeraʿ (זֶרַע) [pronounced *ZEH-rahģ*]	*a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
ʾachar (אַחַר) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*]	*after, following, behind*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dôwr (דּוֹר) [pronounced *dohr*]	*generation; race; people; age, period, time period [of a generation], a time slice*	masculine plural noun with the 3rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1755 BDB #189

Translation: ...you and your descendants after you for generations. There will be a part of the contract which Abraham and his descendants must do; and this will continue. What God is about to tell Abraham to do is to circumcise himself and his people.

When God makes this contract, it is not between Abraham, his household and his seed; it is between God and Abraham; God and Abraham's household; and between God and Abraham's seed. God is on one side of the

[11] Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible;* Chicago; Moody Press, ©1986, p. 339.

contract, Abraham, Abraham's household and Abraham's seed are on the other side of the contract. Abraham does not get to negociate this contract; this contract stands based upon the provisions which God is making, which indicates that this most closely follows the format of a suzerain-vassal contract, as God is laying down all of the provisions.

_____

Then God tells Abraham exactly what he will do for his part of the covenant:

This [is] My covenant which you [all] will keep, between Me and between you [all] and between your seed after you: circumcision for you [all]; every male.	Genesis 17:10	**This [is] My contract which you [all] will keep; [this contract is] between Me and you all and between [Me and] your seed: [There will be] circumcision for all of you—[for] every male.**

This is My agreement, which all of you will keep; this is an agreement between Me and all of you; and between Me and your seed: All of you—every male—will be circumcised.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	This is My covenant, that you shall observe between My Word and you, and your sons after you:--Every male of you being circumcised, though he have not a father to circumcise him.
Latin Vulgate	This is my covenant which you shall observe between me and you, and thy seed after thee: All the male-kind of you shall be circumcised.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	This [is] My covenant which you [all] will keep, between Me and between you [all] and between your seed after you: circumcision for you [all]; every male.
Peshitta (Syriac)	This is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.
Septuagint (Greek)	And this is the covenant which you shall fully keep between Me and you, and between your seed after you for their generations; every male of you shall be circumcised.
Significant differences:	The targum has the covenant between *My Word* and Abraham. It also adds an addition phrase at the end: ...*though he have not a father to circumcise him*. Most of the other differences are minor. We have *descendants* in the English translation from the Syriac, which is not an unreasonable translation from the Hebrew. The final verb is in the Niphal absolute, so there is some flexibility as to how it can be translated.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Christian Community Bible	This is my covenant with you that you will keep, you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised;...
Contemporary English V.	As the sign that you are keeping this promise, you must circumcise every man and boy in your family.
Easy English (Pocock)	This is my *covenant which you must obey. It is my *covenant between me and you. And it is also between me and your *descendants, who will come after you. You must *circumcise all your men.
Easy-to-Read Version	This is the agreement that you will obey. This is the agreement between you and me. This is for all your descendants: Every boy that is born must be circumcised

	[Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.].
Good News Bible (TEV)	You and your descendants must all agree to circumcise every male among you.
The Message	This is the covenant that you are to honor, the covenant that pulls in all your descendants: Circumcise every male.
New Berkeley Version	...and this is My covenant between Me and you and your children after you, which you must observe: Every mal eof you shall be circumcised;...
New Century Version	This is my agreement with you and all your descendants, which you must obey: Every male among you must be circumcised.
New Life Bible	This is My agreement between Me and you and your children after you, which you must obey: Every man among you must have this religious act done.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'This is the Sacred Agreement between you and your seed through all its generations, and Me: All of your males must be circumcised..
Beck's American Translation	This is My covenant you and your descendants after you should keep with Me: Circumcise every male.
God's Word™	This is how you are to be faithful to my promise: Every male among you is to be circumcised.
New American Bible	This is the covenant between me and you and your descendants after you that you must keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. Jn 7:22 Acts 7:8 Rom. 4:11.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And this is the agreement which you are to keep with me, you and your seed after you: every male among you is to undergo circumcision.
Conservapedia	This is My covenant, that you will keep, between Me and you and your children after you: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. Circumcision is a symbol of stripping oneself bare, in total surrender to God. Conventional medicine also recommends it for cleanliness and even the prevention of cancer.
The Expanded Bible	This is my ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18] with you and all your ·descendants [[L]seed], which you must ·obey [keep; guard]: Every male among you must be circumcised [[C]the ritual of membership in the covenant/treaty].
NET Bible®	This is my requirement that you and your descendants after you must keep [tn Heb "This is my covenant that you must keep between me and you and your descendants after you."]: Every male among you must be circumcised [sn For a discussion of male circumcision as the sign of the covenant in this passage see M. V. Fox, "The Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in the Light of the Priestly `ot Etiologies," RB 81 (1974): 557-96].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Such shall be the covenant between Me and you and your offspring to follow which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised.
Kaplan Translation	This is My covenant between Me, and between you and your offspring that you must keep: You must circumcise every male.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	This is My Brit (covenant), which ye shall be shomer over, between Me and you and thy zera after thee; every zachar among you shall be circumcised.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your posterity after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.
Concordant Literal Version	This is My covenant, which you shall keep between Me and you and your seed after you for their generations: Circumcise to yourselves every male.
Context Group Version	This is my covenant, which you { pl } shall keep, between me and you { pl } and your seed after you: every male among you { pl } shall be circumcised.
English Standard Version	This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.
Fred Miller's Revised KJV	This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your seed after you; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.
Heritage Bible	This is my covenant which you shall hedge about between me and you, and your seed after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised..
New King James Version	This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;...
Syndein	"My covenant, keep on guarding/protecting/observing {shamar} . . . {and} your seed/descendants after {you}. Male children {zakar} . . . receive cutting/circumcision {muwl}."
Young's Updated LT	This *is* My covenant which you keep between Me and you, and your seed after you: Every male of you is to be circumcised.

The gist of this verse: God now has a requirement for Abraham and his descendants: all of their males must be circumcised.

Genesis 17:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zôʾth (תאֹז) [pronounced *zoth*]	*here, this, this one; thus;* possibly *another*	feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260
The verb *to be* can be implied by the use of this pronoun.			
b^{e}rîyth (תיִרְב) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
ʾăsher (רֶשֲׁא) [pronounced *uh-SHER*]	*that, which, when, who, whom*	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
shâmar (רַמָשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*]	*to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve*	2nd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036

Translation: This [is] My contract which you [all] will keep;... God will lay out a contract or covenant here, and that is something which will involve things which He will do and things which Abraham and the Jewish race after him will do. Up until now, very little had been demanded of Abraham, other than to leave his family and to move to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 17:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bêyn (וֵיִב) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #996 BDB #107
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (וֵיִב) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine **plural** suffix	Strong's #996 BDB #107
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (וֵיִב) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
zeraʿ (עַרְזֶ) [pronounced *ZEH-rahģ*]	*a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
ʾachar (רַחַא) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*]	*after, following, behind*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation:...[this contract is] between Me and you all and between [Me and] your seed:... I have added a lot of words to this verse in order to convey what I believe is being said here. In part I do this because I am breaking down this verse into its component parts; these extra words allow me to carry over from the previous portion of this verse.

This contract or covenant is between God and you all, indicating that the suffix is a 2nd person masculine plural suffix. This catches us off guard. God is talking simply to Abraham, but he will participate in this covenant, as will those who make up his extended family at this time and all Jews (which have not yet been defined).

When God makes this contract, it is not between Abraham, his household and his seed; it is between God and Abraham; God and Abraham's household; and between God and Abraham's seed. God is on one side of the contract, Abraham, Abraham's household and Abraham's seed are on the other side of the contract. Abraham does not get to negociate this contract; this contract stands based upon the provisions which God is making, which indicates that this most closely follows the format of a **suzerain-vassal contract**, as God is laying down all of the provisions. .

Genesis 17:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	Niphal infinitive absolute	Strong's #4135 BDB #557

Genesis 17:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The infinitive absolute has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add *ing* to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.[12]			
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition with the 2nd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.			
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kohl*]	*every, each, all of, all; any of, any*	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
zâkâr (זָכָר) [pronounced *zaw-KAWR*]	*male, male offspring (whether animal or people);* this word is not used as a collective for males and females	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2145 BDB #271

Translation:...[There will be] circumcision for all of you—[for] every male. Interestingly enough, we do not have the 2nd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect of the verb, but we have the Niphal infinitive absolute instead. The idea is, this requirement is going to stand for a very, very long time. God is not just talking about Abraham, right at this time, circumcising everyone. This is going to continue for a very long time. I would assume that virtually all Jews, even today, are circumcised.

What God requires here will require a lot of faith from Abraham. He and all of the males with him will be circumcised. The verb *to circumcise* is in the Niphal (passive) stem. The verb *to circumcise* originally meant *to cut*. We may have evidence of circumcision in Egypt going back to around 2300 B.C., which is only a few hundred years before these words are being said. Therefore, this may not have been the beginning of circumcision in the world (however, most archeologists who have an opinion believe that circumcision pre-dated Abraham).

[12] *Biblical Hebrew;* Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

Although I have come across many sources who know the purpose of circumcision, I have not seen the doctrine carefully laid out before.

Also, what the intent might be here is a title for this portion of the contract, as this is extremely important.

Gen 17:1–10 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, “Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations. I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.

God first told Abraham what He has done for him; then God tells Abraham what he will have to do. “Every male from among you will be circumcised.”

And you [all] have been circumcised [in] a flesh of your [plural] foreskin and [this] has been a sign of a covenant between Me and between you [all].	Genesis 17:11	**And you all will be circumcised [in] the flesh of your foreskins and [this] will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you [all].**

And you will all be circumcised, cutting away the flesh of your foreskins; and this ritual will be the sign of a covenant between Me and all of you.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, as a sign of the covenant between My Word and you.
Latin Vulgate	And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, that it may be for a sign of the covenant between me and you.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And you have been circumcised [in] a flesh of your [plural] foreskin and [this] has been a sign of a covenant between Me and between you [all].
Peshitta (Syriac)	And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you.
Septuagint (Greek)	And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and you.

Significant differences:

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it will be a symbol of the covenant between us.

Easy English (Pocock)	Someone must *circumcise you in your *flesh. That is, someone must cut off your *foreskin. The *circumcision is evidence that there is a *covenant between me and you.
Easy-to-Read Version	You will cut the skin to show that you follow the agreement between me and you.
Good News Bible (TEV)	From now on you must circumcise every baby boy when he is eight days old, including slaves born in your homes and slaves bought from foreigners. This will show that there is a covenant between you and me.
The Message	Circumcise by cutting off the foreskin of the penis; it will be the sign of the covenant between us.
New Century Version	Cut away your foreskin to show that you are prepared to follow the agreement between me and you.
New Life Bible	In this religious act the skin is cut off from the end of your sex part. This will be the special act of the agreement between Me and you.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...the foreskin of your flesh must be circumcised. This will be the sign of the Sacred Agreement between you and Me.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Clip the flesh of your foreskin. It is a sign of the covenant between me and you.
Beck's American Translation	Circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and that will be the mark of My covenant with you.
God's Word™	All of you must be circumcised. That will be the sign of the promise from me to you.
NIRV	You must be circumcised. That will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.
New Simplified Bible	»You are to undergo circumcision. It will be the sign of the covenant between us.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	In the flesh of your private parts you are to undergo it, as a mark of the agreement between me and you.
Conservapedia	You will circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. This will be token of the covenant between Me and you.
The Expanded Bible	Cut away [Circumcise] [└the flesh of] your foreskin ·to show that you are prepared to follow the agreement [└as a sign of the covenant/treaty] between me and you.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and they shall be circumcised in the foreskin of the body, for an attestation of the Covenant between Myself and them.
HCSB	You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and you.
NET Bible®	You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskins. This will be a reminder [tn Or "sign."] of the covenant between me and you.
NIV – UK	You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	...and clip the flesh of your foreskin; and it becomes a sign of the covenant between me and between you:...
Kaplan Translation	You shall be circumcised [(Radak; Sherashim; Chizzkuni; Septuagint). Or, 'When you are circumcised' (Saadia); or, 'You shall cut off the flesh of your foreskin' (Targum; Rashi).] through the flesh of your foreskin. This shall be the mark of the covenant between Me and you.

Orthodox Jewish Bible	And ye shall circumcise the basar of your arelah; and it shall be an ot brit (sign of the covenant) between Me and you.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token or sign of the covenant (the promise or pledge) between Me and you.
Concordant Literal Version	And circumcised shall you be in the flesh of your foreskin. And it comes to be for a sign of the covenant between Me and yo.
Context Group Version	And you { pl } shall be circumcised in the flesh of your { pl } foreskin; and it shall be a sign of a covenant between me and you { pl }.
English Standard Version	You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.
Syndein	"'Cut off'/'circumcise' the 'male sex-organ'/flesh {basar} of the foreskin {`orlah}. A sign/token/dedication {'owth} of the covenant."
Young's Updated LT	And you have circumcised the flesh of your foreskin, and it has become a token of a covenant between Me and you.

The gist of this verse: The circumcision itself would be a sign of the covenant between Abraham and his descendants and God.

Genesis 17:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	2nd person masculine plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*]	*flesh; body; animal meat*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1320 BDB #142
ʿor^{e}lâh (עָרְלָה) [pronounced *ģohr^{e}-LAW*]	*foreskin (uncircumcised); foreskin of a tree [fruit from the tree for the first 3 years]*	feminine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6190 BDB #790

Translation: And you all will be circumcised [in] the flesh of your foreskins... Now, quite frankly, I have no idea when the practice of circumcision began. If it began here, then God took a word from the language of that day and coined it to mean *circumcision*. If this was a practice done by others, then God used the word that they used.

In any case, this sort of thing would be very difficult for an uncircumcised adult male to contemplate: to cut away some of the flesh from his penis. If this were me, instead of Abraham, then I might say, "Let me think about this proposition of Yours for awhile." The text seems to indicate that Abraham accepted God's requirement immediately.

Genesis 17:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾôwth (אוֹת) [pronounced *oath*]	*sign, token, pledge; remembrance; assurance; omen, warning*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #226 BDB #16
b^{e}rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #996 BDB #107
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]	*in the midst of, between, among;* when found twice, it means *between*	preposition with the 2nd person masculine plural suffix; pausal form	Strong's #996 BDB #107

Translation: ...and [this] will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. The idea is, every male is to know that God has made a covenant with them; and the sign of this covenant is the foreskin of their penis which is cut away (luckily for most Jews, this occurs when a child is an infant).

As an adult male, thinking about circumcision gives me the heebie jeebies. As an infant, my feelings about the matter were probably made known when it occurred. Fortunately, I have forgotten that.

Circumcision would be a sign between God and Abraham and all of his descendants (*you,* in this verse, is in the plural).

Why circumcision and what does it mean? God's relationship to the Jew is going to be a familial relationship. That is, this will be a race of people who all come from Abraham; those who are his seed. Every time that Abraham urinated, he would be reminded of this covenant with God and he will be reminded that this covenant will be with Abraham's physical descendants (those which are his seed). From time to time, throughout history, various individuals would adopt themselves into the Jewish race, and worship their God. In the Old Testament, this almost invariably would be someone who would believe in Jehovah Elohim, and therefore, be deemed righteous by imputation. The idea is, there would be a race of people who are directly related to God through Abraham's seed.

I am related to my grandfather on my father's side and I am related to my nephew of my youngest brother. We are genetically related. Every Jew is genetically related to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is fully human and fully divine. Mary is the mother of His humanity, and in His humanity, Jesus is physically related to every Jew who is

alive today and every Jew who has ever lived (apart from those who became Jews by choice, and even some of them are still related to Jesus, like Rahab the prostitute).

So, every time, Abraham urinated, he would see his circumcised penis and be reminded that God has made a covenant with him and with all of his descendants. It is a familial thing.

All men are born with a sin nature. It is a part of being human. We inherit this sin nature from Adam; it is the distorter of the soul. It is the tempter of the soul. The sin nature the sign that we are fallen creatures. Circumcision, for the Jews, will be the outward sign of their relationship with God; the outward sign of their inward regeneration.

And a son of eight days will be circumcised for you [all], every male to your generations, born of a house and a purchase of money from every son of a foreigner who is not from your seed he.	Genesis 17:12	**And an eight-day-old son will be circumcised with regards to you [all]: [including] every male belonging to your race [lit., *your generations*], he [who is] born [in your] house and [even] [one] purchased with your money from the son of a foreigner not from your descendants.**

All eight-day-old male children will be circumcised because of you. This is every male from your race, born in your house, and sons of foreigners not from your descendants.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the son of eight days shall be circumcised among you, every male in your generations; from him who is brought up in your house, or bought with your silver, unto every son of the peoples who is not of you.
Latin Vulgate	An infant of eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every manchild in your generations: he that is born in the house, as well as the bought servant, shall be circumcised, and whosoever is not of your stock.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And a son of eight days will be circumcised for you [all], every male to your generations, born of a house and a purchase of money from every son of a foreigner who is not from your seed he.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, who is not of your descendants.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the child of eight days old shall be circumcised by you, every male throughout your generations, and the servant born in the house and he that is bought with money, of every son of a stranger, who is not of your seed.

Significant differences:

Although the English translation from the Latin uses the word *infant,* it is not necessarily a bad choice, nor does it indicate that the Hebrew was different here. *Son* (*ben*), in the Hebrew, is not related specifically to age. The lâmed preposition gave many ancient translators a tough time here, and most translated this as if it were a bêyth preposition (*in, into; among*).

At the very end of this verse is a demonstrative/personal pronoun. The targum, Latin and Syriac appear to bring this pronoun in half way through the verse, which is not illegitimate—however, that is a long distance to carry a pronoun.

When it comes to being *bought with money,* the targum and Syriac introduce this with an *or* and the English translation from the Latin has *as well as*. The Hebrew has the simple word *and*.

At the very end, *seed* has a number of ways that it can be translated, many of which are found above.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	From now on, your family must circumcise every baby boy when he is eight days old. You must even circumcise any man or boy you have as a slave, both those born in your homes and those you buy from foreigners. This will be a sign that my promise to you will last forever.
Easy English (Pocock)	Someone must *circumcise all males when they are 8 days old. People must continue to do that all the time in future ages. You must *circumcise all those that are born in your *household. And you must *circumcise those that you have bought from foreigners. You must do it, although they are not your family.
Easy-to-Read Version	When the baby boy is eight days old, you will circumcise him. Every boy born among your people and every boy that is a slave of your people must be circumcised.
The Message	Every male baby will be circumcised when he is eight days old, generation after generation--this includes house-born slaves and slaves bought from outsiders who are not blood kin.
New Berkeley Version	Eight days after his birth every boy born to you throughout your generations shall be circumcised, whether he be of your family circle or bought with money from any outsiders and not of your own offspring;...
New Century Version	From now on when a baby boy is eight days old, you will circumcise him. This includes any boy born among your people or any who is your slave, who is not one of your descendants.
New Life Bible	Every male child among you who is eight days old must have this religious act done, through all time. The same must be done to all the men born in your house or bought with your money from any stranger, who is not one of your famil.
New Living Translation	From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	All of your male children must be circumcised by you when they are eight-days old, throughout all your generations. [This includes all the] servants who are born in your house, and those who are bought with money (the sons of aliens who are not your seed).
Ancient Roots Translinear	Circumcise your sons at eight days and all males in your generation born in the house. Any son of foreigners bought with silver and not of your seed: circumcise him.
Beck's American Translation	When a boy is eight days old, circumcise every one of your males in the coming ages, whether he is a boy born in the household or bought from any foreigner who is not one of your descendants.
Christian Community Bible	When he is eight days old, every male among you will be circumcised, generation after generation;...
God's Word™	For generations to come every male child who is eight days old must be circumcised, whether he is born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner who's not related to you.

New American Bible	Throughout the ages, every male among you, when he is eight days old, shall be circumcised, including houseborn slaves and those acquired with money from any foreigner who is not of your descendants. Lv 12:3; Lk 1:59; 2:21.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Every male among you, from one generation to another, is to undergo circumcision when he is eight days old, with every servant whose birth takes place in your house, or for whom you gave money to someone of another country, and not of your seed.
Conservapedia	Every eight-day-old boy will be circumcised among you. This includes every man-child in your generations. You shall do the same with slaves, whether born in your household or bought with money from foreigners, who are not your direct descendants.
The Expanded Bible	From now on [└Throughout your generations] when a baby boy is eight days old, you will circumcise him. This includes any ·boy born among your people [└house-born slave] or any who is ·your slave [└bought with money from a foreigner], who is not one of your ·descendants [└seed].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And upon the eighth day every male shall be circumcised, in their generations, whether born of the family, or purchased for money; although he is not of your race.
New Advent Bible	An infant of eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every manchild in your generations: he that is born in the house, as well as the bought servant, shall be circumcised, and whosoever is not of your stock.
NET Bible®	Throughout your generations every male among you who is eight days old [tn Heb "the son of eight days."] must be circumcised, whether born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not one of your descendants.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Generation after generation, every male among you who is eight days old is to be circumcised, including slaves born within your household and those bought from a foreigner not descended from you.
exeGeses companion Bible	...and circumcise the son of eight days among you - every male in your generations - birthed in the house, or a chattel of silver of a son of a stranger not of your seed...
Kaplan Translation	'Throughout all generations, every male shall be circumcised when he is eight days old [Cf. Leviticus 12:3.]. [This shall include] those born in your house [Some say that this denotes homeborn slaves (Shabbath 135b; Rashi).], as well as [slaves] bought with cash from an outsider, who is not your descendant.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every zachar in your dorot, he that is born in the bais, or bought with kesef of any foreigner, which is not of thy zera.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	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 not of your offspring.
Concordant Literal Version	And a son of eight days shall be circumcised by you, every male of your generations, homeborn or acquired with money from any foreigner, he who is not of your seed.

Context Group Version	And he who is eight days old shall be circumcised among you { pl }, every male throughout your { pl } generations, he who is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of your seed.
Darby Translation	And at eight days old shall every male in your generations be circumcised among you -- he who is born in the house, and he who is bought with money, any stranger who is not of thy seed.
English Revised Version	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,...
King James 2000 Version	And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.
New RSV	Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring.
Syndein	"{He who is} eight days old . . . receive cutting/circumcism {muwl}. Male children {zakar} in your generations, born { yaliyd} in the house { bayth}, or bought {miqnah} with money {keceph} of any stranger, who is not of your seed/descendants." {Note: Means that male babies are to be circumcised on the eighth day of life. Scientifically this is a good time. Per RBT, before eighth day, the child could hemorrhage and die - the properties of the blood to coagulate are not ready. And, on the eighth day, the chance of infection is at its lowest. Danger for infection increases on the ninth day and following.}.
Young's Updated LT	And a son of eight days is circumcised by you; every male to your generations, born in the house, or bought with money from any son of a stranger, who is not of your seed.

The gist of this verse: Male infants of 8-days old were to be circumcised, whether they are related to Abram or not.

One of the things that has bothered me, and I have not been able to figure it out, is, nearly every time that God speaks, I have trouble with the translation. It is often more complex than the translation of the sentences on both sides of God speaking. The gist of this verse is fairly easily, and well-represented by the translation of the New Living Bible: From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. However, more literal translation is quite difficult.

Genesis 17:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וַ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
sh^{e}mônâh (שְׁמֹנָה) [pronounced *sh^{e}moh-NAW*]	*eight*	feminine singular numeral	Strong's #8083 BDB #1032
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced *yaw-MEEM*]	*days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Genesis 17:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition with the 2nd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.

Translation: And an eight-day-old son will be circumcised with regards to you [all]:... This verse begins simply enough; an 8-day-old son must be circumcised. There is a difficult use of the lâmed preposition here, which I think is reasonably rendered *because of you*. So we may want to render this And an eight-day-old son will be circumcised because of you [all]:... This begins a ritual which will continue for hundreds of generations, right down to this very day. Not only would Abram and all of those males with him be circumcised, but so would all of those children, from here on in, born to them.

God had a particular, familial relationship to the Jews, even though, at this point in time in Genesis 17, just what that means and how it will come to pass is unclear. However, just add this to the "lucky guesses" found in Genesis—God establishes here that there will be a familial relationship between Abraham and his descendants and God. That relationship will be developed more fully in prophecy and then it will come to pass in time. Genesis is often called the book of beginnings and the seeds of the most fundamental and important doctrines are found in this book. This is one of them—that the Jews have a familial relationship with God.

Many of those genealogies that you see in the Bible take us from Abraham to the humanity of Jesus Christ. Again, this is the concept of progressive revelation. The seeds are all planted in Genesis, and, as we move through the Bible, are revealed with greater and great depth.

In this lesson, we will see exactly what circumcision signifies. Circumcision is a picture of regeneration. The basis of the Jewish race is regeneration; that is, they believe in Jehovah Elohim and they are regenerated (born again) and made righteous.

Circumcision is the cutting away of some skin at the end of a male's phallus. *Regeneration* refers to the act of being born again. Circumcision represents the act of regeneration.

Circumcision Represents Regeneration

1. The circumcision of Abraham will establish new life in Abraham and new life in Sarah. At this point in time, Abraham is too old to have sex and Sarai is too old to conceive. God will change this. God will give them both new life.
2. When Abraham steps out in faith and has himself circumcised, God will revitalize him sexually. His sexual organ will be brought back to life. In this way, Abraham will be reborn.
3. Circumcision is therefore connected to rebirth or to regeneration.
4. Abraham was sexually dead; God will make him sexually alive and potent. This is a picture of Abraham moving not only from death to life, but this is the key to the fulfillment of all God's promises to him. As uncircumcised (sexually dead, unregenerated), none of God's promises can be fulfilled to Abraham. As circumcised, Abraham is sexually revitalized, which represents regeneration; and so all of God's promises to Abraham can be fulfilled.
5. So there is no misunderstanding, Abraham was spiritually regenerated many years ago. However, all of this is done to develop an analogy of rebirth, an analogy to rebirth that was set up 4000 years ago and still has meaning today.
6. Sarai had never given birth to a child, so we may reasonably assume that she was barren all of her life. Now, she is too old to have children. So, she is doubly-barren: barren throughout her life and now, simply to old to conceive.
7. As a result of God's covenant, which included the circumcision of Abraham, Sarai will be made fertile. Her reproductive system will be given new life.
8. Circumcision therefore means, that which is dead is made fully alive.
9. In our illustration, Abraham and Sarah, who have never before had children of their own, and, therefore, cannot see God's promises to them fulfilled, will be given life more abundantly than they ever had before.
10. Therefore, we need to understand that circumcision is taking that which was dead and giving it life again. Doctrinally, this is regeneration. Circumcision represents being born again.
11. Jesus explains the concept of regeneration (being born again) to Nicodemus. There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Him at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him." Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "But how can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked Him. "Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?" Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:1–12).
12. Paul expresses this doctrinally, tying circumcision to regeneration: And when **you were dead** in trespasses and in the **uncircumcision** of your flesh, **He made you alive** with Him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and which was in opposition to us, and He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13–14).
13. Understand that circumcision is a (visible) sign of God's relationship to Abraham. It is a visible sign of this covenant between Jehovah Elohim and Abraham.
14. However, in most situations, we cannot simply look at someone and say, "Yeah, he's circumcised." Unless you go to the gym with your buddies, and use the showers there, you do not know which of them are circumcised and which are not. That is, a person who is circumcised is unknown to the outside world; your family members know this, but the rest of the world, for the most part, does not know. Therefore, circumcision is a good representation of regeneration, which occurs in a number of people, but you cannot just look at a person and say, "Oh, you are regenerated." Circumcision is real but not something that we can readily see; regeneration is real, but not something that we can readily see.
15. Circumcision is a ritual, and, as a ritual, it must mean something. God does not have us go through meaningless rituals; all of the rituals in the plan of God have great meaning. Circumcision means that God will take that which is dead and make it alive. Abraham is sexually dead, and God is going to revive his sexual apparatus.
16. Note an additional piece of information concerning this ritual: God has come to Abraham right before he

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has been sexually revitalized. This represents regeneration. We are not regenerated on our own; God the Holy Spirit regenerates us.

17. All Jews must be regenerated (born again) in order to have a permanent relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Abraham's son and grandson).
18. Every male Jew views his phallus several times a day when urinating, and he recalls this portion of the Bible, where God will physically regenerate Abraham's sexual potency along with Sarai's womb, and this represents the spiritual regeneration which establishes a familial relationship between man and God. The family relationship must take place in order for God's promises to man to be fulfilled. Ideally speaking, all believers, several times a day, take note of their spiritual status and their relationship to God.
19. Every Jew, when he urinates, ought to recognize that he is related directly to God and that this ritual goes back in time 4000 years. It is God's desire for such a one to ask himself, "Just what does this mean? Am I circumcised for no reason? Why did God, 4000 years ago, determine that all Jews would be circumcised?"
20. All rituals have meaning, and if we do not know what they mean, then we are wasting our time participating in them. The only clearly required ritual for the Church Age is the Eucharist, where Jesus's death for our sins is represented by eating the bread and drinking the cup.
21. Regeneration means that, God takes that which is dead and He makes it alive again.
22. Our free will is a part of this decision process. I must admit, if I were Abraham, I may not have had the same faith to agree to circumcision. But Abraham, by an act of his free will, trusts God here; and he trusts that God will regenerate Abraham so that he is able to father children once again.
23. The act and affects of circumcision are real and last a lifetime; the act and affects of regeneration are real and last forever.
24. Even Moses later helped to interpret the concept of circumcision in Deut. 30:6 And Jehovah your **God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your seed, to love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, **so that you may live**. God will circumcise our hearts, with the purpose that, we will live. Since the ritual circumcision is performed upon living males, circumcision of the heart must therefore refer to an internal regeneration.
25. The physical act of circumcision is not the same as the spiritual act of regeneration; circumcision only represents regeneration.
26. The act and affects of circumcision are real and last a lifetime; the act and affects of regeneration are real and last forever. You cannot go from being circumcised to being uncircumcised, just as you cannot go from having been regenerated back to being unregenerate.
27. God, through Ezekiel, describes this circumcision of the heart: "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." (Ezek. 11:19–20). "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." (Ezek. 36:26–27). God gives those with *hearts of stone* a new heart; God takes that which is dead and makes it alive so that they may live unto Him.
28. Paul teaches this in Rom. 2:28–29a For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that outwardly in flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart. Salvation is regeneration; not being physically circumcised. It is the *circumcision of the heart* which God looks upon. Jews were not related to God because they were physically circumcised; they were related to God because they had been circumcised of heart; their heart had been regenerated.
29. This is all related to the new covenant between God and Israel, which will come to pass in the Millennium: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his

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brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer. 31:31–34).

30. Because circumcision is a ritual, it is not the ritual that is important but what the ritual represents. Circumcision represents regeneration. "You must be born again."
31. We as believers in the Church Age are not called upon to be circumcised. Some of us are and some of us are not. God does not require us, when we are born again, to be circumcised. Paul explains that circumcision is a Jewish ritual, and that is has meaning, but it is not required of believers in the Church Age: In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of the Messiah. Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses (Col. 2:11–13). God making us alive is regeneration. The key to our relationship with God is regeneration and not circumcision. Just as baptism represents being dead in our trespasses and sins, and then being raised up; so circumcision ultimately represents regeneration.
32. There were legalists who came into Galatia and tried to convince the gentiles in the Galatian church to be circumcised. Paul writes to them, saying: For both circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation (Gal. 6:15). It is regeneration which is the key; not whether a person has been circumcised or not. In fact, Paul spends much of 2 chapters telling the Galatians that they do not need to be circumcised (Gal. 5–6). Since this was a problem in the early church, Paul reiterates this position in 1Cor. 7:18–19 Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised. Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter, but keeping God's commandments does.
33. Therefore, circumcision is a ritual which God required of the Jews. This ritual both emphasized regeneration and His familial relationship with the Jews.

To the best of my knowledge, I do not believe that this relationship has been formally established in theology before. Gill mentions it as an aside in his exegesis of Col. 2:11, as does the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary. The closest I saw to a completely developed doctrine was in some writings by Spurgeon.

However, there are several Christian individuals who have already recognized this relationship. And, unfortunately, this connection is posted on some legalistic websites and on, quite frankly, weird websites.[13] Personally, I put together this concept, and then searched the internet to see if this had been developed before by anyone of note. So this relationship has been previously noted, but not really developed into a complete doctrine.

One of the fascinating things is, in do-your-own-thing, degenerate San Francisco, there is a **movement to ban performing a circumcision** in the city limits. This is simply one of the movements to separate the United States from her Judeo-Christian roots.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

So far, we have studied nearly the first 12 verses of Gen. 17:

Gen 17:1–12a When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations." I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I

[13] One place that I found this connection was at the *Global Oneness (co-creating a happy world)* website under the banner *Christian Dream Interpretation*.

have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.

We studied just exactly how circumcision spoke of regeneration. After being circumcised, Abraham and Sarah would be both sexually revitalized, which represents the concept of new life. New lift is regeneration.

Now all of this is representative. Abraham was not born again because he was circumcised. He had been made righteous in God's sight a very long time ago (Gen. 15:6). In this doctrine, we ran up against the expression *a new heart* and *a new spirit*. What are these things?

There are things in the Doctrine of Circumcision and Regeneration which need clarifying.

What is this New Heart?

1. Let's go back to what is written in Ezekiel about the circumcision of the heart: "Then I will give them one heart, **and I will put a new spirit within them**, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." (Ezek. 11:19–20). "**I will** give you a new heart and **put a new spirit within you**; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." (Ezek. 36:26–27).
2. God originally created man in His image, and this would include us being created with a body, soul and spirit. The soul allows us to interact with man and the spirit allows us to interact with God.
3. In fact, this is one of the ways that we are made in the shadow image of God; God is a Triune Being, 3 Persons with the same essence; and man was created with a body, soul and spirit, a triune being of sorts.
4. However, when Adam sinned, he lost the human spirit. He no longer was able to communicate with God. He was afraid of God and he hid from God when God called him.
5. When God came to Adam and Adam believed in Him, communication was restored, which means, Adam was spiritually regenerated. In other words, God created within him a new spirit; God restored his human spirit to him.
6. This is what regeneration is. We are given the human spirit; or our human spirit is revived so that we may have fellowship with God again. It is the human spirit which is the target for our trust in Bible doctrine. Without the human spirit, we have only a human soul, which is unable to properly process Bible doctrine. But the soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1Cor. 2:14). Furthermore, it is Bible doctrine which is the key to our spiritual growth. Grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18a).
    1) The word used here and translated *soulish* is psuchikos (ψυχικός) [pronounced *psoo-khee-KOSS*], which means, *soulish; natural; unregenerate*. Strong's #5591.
    2) This word is built upon the Greek word translated *soul*.
7. We are born physically alive, but spiritually dead. Rom 6:23a The wages of sin is death. And Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all sinned (Rom. 5:12). See also Gen. 2:17 Rom. 5:17 7:24
8. The soul and the spirit are different and the Bible differentiates between the two. Heb. 4:12
9. It is because of Jesus Christ that we can be regenerated. It stands written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul," the last Adam [= Jesus Christ] was a life-giving Spirit (1Cor. 15:45).
10. It is because we exercise faith in Jesus Christ that we are regenerated. "Truly, truly, I say to you, He who

What is this New Heart?

hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life." (John 5:24).

11. David describes this regeneration in Psalm 51:10: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew [or, *make anew, repair*] a right spirit within me. The clean heart means that we have been forgiven of our sins and made positionally righteous; and the spirit being renewed is the human spirit being activated or made alive.
12. Jesus Christ insisted to Nicodemus that he must be born again. John 3:1–16
13. Given Psalm 51:10 and John 3:1–16, we can conclude that regeneration occurs in both the Old and New Testaments.
14. Regenerated man has a body, soul and spirit. 1Sam. 1:15 Job 7:11 1Thess. 5:23
15. The believer has his soul, spirit and body preserved. And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blamelessly at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Thess. 5:23).
16. Therefore, because we are born spiritually dead, we come into this world with just a body and a soul. When we are born again, our human spirit is made alive or activated. Before we are born again, we are soulish and unable to process spiritual information. After we are born again, we have a target for spiritual information: the human spirit. Before we were born again, we were estranged from God; we were unable to have fellowship with Him. After we are born again, we are able to know Him and to be in fellowship with Him, both of which are true potentials in the Christian life because we have a human spirit.
17. Jesus Christ, because He was born without sin (the sin nature is passed down genetically by means of the father, and Jesus did not have a human father), He therefore had from birth a body (John 1:14 Heb. 10:5), soul (Isa. 53:11 Matt. 26:38) and spirit (Luke 23:46 John 19:30). Jesus, therefore, did not have to be regenerated—He never lost fellowship with God.
18. One of the reasons the Jesus is called the Last Adam (1Cor. 15:45) is, both were born with a body, a soul and a spirit.
19. Adam sinned, so he had to be regenerated. Our Lord never sinned, so He did not have to be regenerated. 2Cor. 5:21 Heb. 4:15
20. Conclusion: being born again actually involves a change in our inner person; we are given a human spirit, which allows us to learn and understand God's Word and allows us to have fellowship with God.
21. To sum up, both Adam and Jesus (the last Adam) were born trichotomous, with a body, soul and spirit. We are born dichotomus, with only a body and soul. The spirit is what allows us to have fellowship with God and where doctrine is stored. When Adam sinned, he lost the human spirit and God had to come to him. Because Adam sinned, we are all born spiritually dead—i.e., without a human spirit. We are born with a sin nature, something that we acquire from our human fathers. However, when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are regenerated, which includes having our human spirit activated or revitalized.

This explaind this whole circumcision thing. Abraham was circumcised and all of the males of his household were circumcised because this represented new life. The new life is both physical (he was sexually revitalized) but it was also representative of having new life as a result of being born again.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

One more related doctrine:

The key to the relationship between God and Abraham's seed is regeneration, which establishes a familial relationship between God and man.

The Familial Relationship between God and Abraham's Seed

1. The ritual of circumcision establishes a familial relationship between God and Abraham (and his seed). Circumcision is a ritual, so, by itself, it means nothing. However, what is important is what circumcision

The Familial Relationship between God and Abraham's Seed

represents. Circumcision represents sexual regeneration which establishes this familial relationship between Abraham and God.

2. At this point in time, this familial relationship between God and Abraham is undefined.
3. In fact, at this point in time, in Gen. 17, Abraham does not even have any children by his wife Sarai.
4. It will be prophesied and then it will come to pass that Abraham and Sarai will have a son.
5. This familial relationship is part and parcel of being born again. In regeneration, we have the option of knowing God and having fellowship with God.
6. God is personally involved in this regeneration. God the Father planned the cross, Jesus Christ went to the cross, and God the Holy Spirit both reveals this to us and regenerates us. Therefore, we have 3 "men" who will come to Abraham in the next chapter. This is representative of the Trinity involvement in our regeneration and in our spiritual lives.
7. Abraham is already regenerated spiritually. When he believed in Y^{e}howah Elohim, God imputed righteousness to him. Gen. 15:6
8. However, what is being established here is a familial relationship based upon circumcision which represents regeneration.
9. God will continue to maintain His covenant with Abraham through his son Isaac and through his son's son, Jacob, down through the ages.
10. The circumcision of Abraham will establish new life in Abraham and new life in Sarah.
11. At this point in time, Abraham is too old to have sex and Sarai is too old to conceive. God will change this. God will regenerate both of them sexually (which represents our spiritual regeneration to new life).
12. Abraham and Sarai do not have the ability to revitalize their own reproductive organs; only God can do this. Similarly, we have no innate ability to revitalize our human spirit. Only God can do that. Only God can regenerate us.
13. When Abraham steps out in faith and has himself circumcised, God will revitalize him sexually. He will become capable of fathering a child and Sarai will become capable of conceiving a child.
14. Circumcision is therefore connected to a rebirth or to regeneration.
15. God tells Abraham: "I will keep My covenant between Me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. And to you and your offspring after you I will give the land where you are residing--all the land of Canaan--as an eternal possession, and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7–8).
16. Further, God tells Abraham: "This is My covenant, which you are to keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every one of your males must be circumcised. You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and you. Throughout your generations, every male among you at eight days old is to be circumcised. This includes a slave born in your house and one purchased with money from any foreigner. The one who is not your descendant, a slave born in your house, as well as one purchased with money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant." (Gen. 17:10–13). Therefore, every male child associated with the Jews is to be circumcised. The circumcision is a sign of their rebirth as well.
17. God has attached great importance to Abraham's posterity and this covenant. They are related to Abraham and, somehow, they are related to God.
18. Every time a male Jew urinates, he looks down, and he is reminded of this familial relationship which is established, beginning with Abraham and going down through Isaac and Jacob. This is the visible sign between God and the Jews throughout all their generations.
19. Even very secular Jews today must wonder, now and again, what is my relationship with God all about? What is this circumcision all about?
20. Think about this for a moment—how would man come up with a concept like circumcision? What man, who knows nothing about circumcision, would look down on his phallus and say, "I've got a great idea: I think I should cut some of the skin away from this"? We have no idea how exactly circumcision originated; but God, in Gen. 17, uses it to establish a relationship between Him and Abraham.
21. Throughout history (until the Church Age), Jews will all be circumcised; Gentiles will not (although now, many gentiles are circumcised, particularly in countries where there are a lot of Christians). Therefore, every man who is circumcised is genetically (or in a familial way) related to Abraham (I am speaking in

The Familial Relationship between God and Abraham's Seed

principle here; obviously, those coming from the outside and becoming Jews are not genetically related to Abraham; however, either their children or their grandchildren will be through intermarriage).

22. This is important because Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Universe, will be genetically related to Abraham, even though He existed in eternity before Abraham ("Before Abraham, I existed eternally" John 8:58).
23. From the very beginning, God has been establishing this familial relationship between Himself and regenerated man.
    1) God said to the serpent after the fall: "I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Gen. 3:15). So there is a promise to be fulfilled in the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Woman would crush the head of the serpent (Satan).
    2) The woman later recognizes that God has given her a new seed in Seth, after Cain murdered Abel (Gen. 4:25).
    3) God's covenant would then be with Noah and his seed after him (Gen. 9:9).
    4) God establishes his covenant with Abraham and his seed in Gen. 12:7 13:15 15:18 17:7–8 24:7; and continues this covenant with Isaac and his seed (Gen. 26:3–4). Isaac transfers this covenant to his son Jacob in Gen. 28:4, which God confirms in Gen. 28:13 35:12.
    5) Jehovah God later promised: "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel [which means, *God with us*]." (Isa. 7:14). This is expanded in Isa. 9:6 "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
24. Through the virgin Mary, all of this would be fulfilled. Jesus would be born to her, a virgin, so that He is genetically related to Mary and therefore, to all Jews. Luke 1:35 2:11 Matt. 1:23 28:18 John 1:1–2, 14 Heb. 1:8 1John 4:14
25. Therefore, Abraham, the father of the Jews, is genetically related to Jesus Christ.
26. In fact, when a few of the genealogies of Scripture are strung together, we have a straight line between Abraham and Jesus.
27. In the book of Genesis are the seeds of many of the doctrines which would later be expounded upon as time went on. This is known as progressive revelation. We learn more and more about a doctrine as time goes on; God the Holy Spirit reveals more and more about a doctrine as time goes on.
28. Believers in the Church Age are sons by adoption. Rom. 8:15 Gal. 4:5 Eph. 1:5
29. Adoption in the ancient world is somewhat different than we think of it. A king or a rich man may look among his own sons and see no one worthy of taking his place or inheriting his fortune. However, he may have an adult slave who is hardworking, intelligent and moral. So, the king or rich man will "adopt" this slave as his son—even though he may be fully an adult—in order to inherit what belongs to the king or to the rich man. A familial relationship is established by means of adoption. This describes our relationship to God.
30. However, God does not look at us and think, "Yes, yes, yes, this person is worthy to be My son." He looks at Jesus Christ, and He alone is worthy; but we are sons of God because we are in Him and we share His Sonship. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law, that He might purchase those under Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (Gal. 4:4–6).
31. The is established through faith in Jesus Christ. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26). See also John 1:12 1John 3:2

In conclusion, Jews are actually genetically related to Jesus Christ through the Virgin Mary. However, they must exercise faith in Jehovah Elohim in order to be regenerated (Gen. 15:6 2Kings 18:5 Psalm 2:12 5:4 9:10 13:5 Ezek. 36:26–27). In the Church Age, we are sons of God by means of adoption. We believe in Jesus Christ and we are adopted as God's sons in the Beloved.

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 17:12b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kohl*]	*every, each, all of, all; any of, any*	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
zâkâr (זָכָר) [pronounced *zaw-KAWR*]	*male, male offspring (whether animal or people);* this word is not used as a collective for males and females	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2145 BDB #271
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dôwr (דּוֹר) [pronounced *dohr*]	*generation; race; people; age, period, time period [of a generation], a time slice*	masculine plural noun with the 2nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1755 BDB #189

Translation:...[including] every male belonging to your race [lit., *your generations*],... This would continue forever, as long as there are Jews. *Generations* here is in the plural, as is the masculine suffix, so God is designating that this be done throughout the generations that follow Abram, and that this was specific to the Jewish race. The word used here can refer both to generations and to race; but the key element is, a familial relationship. From that point on, all Jews would be circumcised. We do not yet have that designation *Jew* but Abram was designated an *Hebrew* back in Gen. 14:13, which designation has stayed with us until this day.

What is happening here is, Abram is beginning a new race, and this new race is related to God, and this ritual, circumcision—again, a lousy ritual for an adult male—will define and explain the relationship between God and the Jews. At this point in time, there are essentially 3 races: Japhetic, Semitic and Hamitic, all sons of Noah. However, at this point, God is beginning a new race with Abram.

One of the things that Christians may find confusing is the fact that there is an actual genetic relationship between Jews and Jesus; but that the true relationship between Jews and Jesus is their exercising faith in Him so that they are regenerated (in the Old Testament, this was exercising faith in Y^{e}howah Elohim). This is actually a clearer issue for believers in the Church Age—we are not Jews, so we are not genetically related to Jesus Christ (except in the sense of being human). However, we are adopted into the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul will spend an entire chapter of Romans discussing these issues, a study which we will insert into this Genesis series (in 10 or so lessons).

Gen 17:12a He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations,...

A question that some might have is, *why are males circumcised only; why is there no circumcision for women?* This is because, it is through the man that the sin nature is passed. Men and women are both born with sin natures, but the sin nature is passed down from the man to his children, both males and females. However, only his sons will pass along the sin nature to their children. This is why Jesus is known as the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15). This is why there is the virgin birth (Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:23). This is why the Coniah curse (which curse represents the sin nature) is so closely tied to two lines of Christ and why one line—the line to Joseph—was cursed (Jer. 22:24, 30). God does not simply devise a miracle because it is way cool; the virgin birth is necessary.

Jesus cannot be born without a sin nature unless there is no male involved. Therefore, only males are circumcised, as this represents regeneration, a cutting away and a removal of the old nature.

Being born again means that we can now have a relationship with God through the human spirit. However, in order for that to occur, the sin nature must be shut down temporarily. This is what it means *to be in fellowship*. The body, soul and spirit are all functioning; and the sin nature is set aside or momentarily shut down. When we sin, the spirit is shut down temporarily; our temporal relationship with God is shut down (we are *out of fellowship*), and our sin nature is in control again. The mechanics are simple and have been covered before: we name our sins to God, and our fellowship is restored; we sin, and we are out of fellowship. Although we have studied that in numerous places, most recently this was found in the doctrine **The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis**.

The difference between the man and the woman goes back to original sin. The woman was deceived when she sinned; the man knew exactly what he was doing when he sinned. He could choose between his woman outside of the garden or God inside of the garden, and he chose the woman. Because the man knowingly violated the one prohibition that God set up to test man's volition, the sin nature is passed down through the man.

Therefore, the virgin birth is not just some parlor trick, but absolutely necessary to the incarnation. In order for someone to be born without a sin nature, they must be born apart from a man's genetic contribution, because with that contribution comes the sin nature. Since Jesus is virgin-born, He is born without a sin nature. This is why the Bible is very careful to record the two lines of our Lord: the legal line, in which is the Coniah curse (the sin nature) which goes to Joseph (Matt. 1); and the biological line which goes through Mary (Luke 3:23–38).

Genesis 17:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâlîyd (דִּילִי) [pronounced *yaw-LEED*]	*born;* possibly *son*	verbal adjective; masculine singular adjective construct	Strong's #3211 BDB #409
bayith (תַּיִב) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]	*house, residence; household, habitation* as well as *inward*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
miq^{e}nâh (הָנְקִמ) [pronounced *mihk-NAW*]	*a purchase, a buying; a document of purchase; cost, price, a purchase-price*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #4736 BDB #889
keçeph (ףֶסֶכ) [pronounced *KEH-sef*]	*silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3701 BDB #494
min (מִן) [pronounced *min*]	*from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than*	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (לכ) [pronounced *kohl*]	*every, each, all of, all; any of, any*	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
bên (בֶן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Genesis 17:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nêkâr (נֵכָר) [pronounced *nay-KAHR*]	*foreign, that which is foreign, foreignness, alien, that which is alien; foreign gods*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5236 BDB #648
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *uh-SHER*]	*that, which, when, who, whom*	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lôʾ (אֹל or אוֹל) [pronounced *low*]	*not, no*	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
There are several ways this negation is used. (1) It is an absolute *no* given to a question. (2) It can be used as an interrogative when an affirmative answer is expected. 2Kings 5:26 Job 2:10 Jer. 49:9. (3) It can be used to mean *without*. 1Chron. 2:30 Psalm 59:4 Job 12:24 34:24. (4) It can be translated *not yet*. 2Kings 20:4 Psalm 139:16. (5) The negative is prefixed to adjective to negate them; to substantives to indicate that they are not that thing. Although some claim that this negation can stand on its own to mean *nothing;* there is no clear proof of that.[14]			
min (מִן) [pronounced *min*]	*from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than*	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
zeraʿ (עֶרֶז) [pronounced *ZEH-rahģ*]	*a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
hûwʾ (אוה) [pronounced *hoo*]	*he, it; himself* as a demonstrative pronoun: *that, this*	3rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
This pronoun can be used in the emphatic sense. Sometimes, the verb *to be* is implied when this pronoun is used.			
Hûwʾ is also used as a masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun and is rendered *that; this*.			
In examining this verse, I wonder if perhaps this pronoun is better placed at the beginning of the next verse? I have approached this in two different ways in my translations.			

Translation: ...he [who is] born [in your] house and [even] [one] purchased with your money from the son of a foreigner not from your descendants. However, even though God is establishing a new race of people, He is quick to add that this relationship will not be simply between those descended from Abram. Whoever is born in Abram's house (or the house of any Hebrew) would be circumcised as well; even if that child was purchased as a slave (or his parents are slaves to the Hebrews). The implication is, even foreigners drawn to Israel will take part in this, although this is first proposed in relation to those purchased as slaves.

Again, the New Living Translation helps to make this translation clear: From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased.

[14] Taken from H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament;* ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 425 (abbreviated).

Gen 17:12 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,

The faith of the Jews was to be evangelistic. We tend to think of Christianity as evangelical, but not the faith of the Jews (the correct understanding of their faith). The Jews had an outreach mission to the nations around them. We find this illustrated in the **Book of Jonah**, where Jonah goes to Nineveh and evangelizes the Assyrians there (if Jonah had his druthers, he would have preferred to watch God destroy these Assyrians).

In our passage, the rites and rituals of the Jewish faith are extended to those who are their slaves and to the children of their slaves. The Jews were to share their faith in Y^{e}howah Elohim with even their slaves.

Because of the way slavery has been incorrectly presented historically, we tend to view slavery as some great evil which the United States practiced more onerously than others, as if this is somehow a sin specific to the United States.

Slavery and the United States

1. Slavery existed as far back as Abraham's time (circa 2000 B.C.) and certainly before that.
2. Slavery was the modus operandi of the world for several millennia and it is still practiced today.
3. Whereas the United States practiced slavery, its practice was no less humane than that practiced anywhere else in the world.
4. Many southern plantations taught their slaves to read and write and presented them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. A believer in Jesus Christ is going to share his faith. Some may argue that this made a slave more valuable and less likely to rebel—and that is true—but it also showed a recognition that slaves were valuable before God as well.
5. However, it was also true that some states outlawed teaching slaves how to read and write (and some masters violated these laws as well).
6. Some missionaries brought the gospel to southern slaves in particular. Even some unbelieving masters allowed this, some hoping that this would make the slaves more obedient.
7. Some Negro slaves were allowed to go to worship services, and were very much a part of the "second awakening" of the United States (which refers to a spiritual awakening) in the early 19th century. Because they were slaves does not make their spiritual impact any less important to our nation. Slaves who are saved—particularly those who grow spiritually—are extremely important to the spiritual condition of a nation.
8. Thomas Jonathon Jackson ("Stonewall" Jackson), the famous Confederate Civil War general, organized Sunday School classes for free Blacks and slaves.[2]
9. Gospel music was first codified in the book "Slave Songs of The United States" (by Allen, Ware, Garrison, 1867). We know from their history as slaves, they sang work songs, gospel songs, and songs about freedom (depending upon what was allowed in the field).
10. Slave owners knew that the abuse of their slaves brought about a diminished production. Beating slaves did not result in greater obedience or greater production. Abusive slave owners were more likely to have slaves run away or, worse yet, rebel against them. So, even though there were undoubtedly abuses heaped upon slaves beyond being slaves, this made the slaves far less valuable to the slave owner.
11. Because tending to cotton fields was so labor intensive under a very hot sun, it was not unusual for slave owners to limit working hours, grant frequent holidays and to provide long rest periods in the middle of the day for their slaves.[1] This is not a difficult concept—if you treat those who work for you well, they will have respect for you as well.
12. There were Black confederate soldiers (a fact of history which is ignored in our history books).
13. During the Civil War, many slaves were left with the farms and the women and children. In many cases, the women and children became their responsibility.
14. Both Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, the 2 great confederate generals, set their slaves free prior to the Civil War, so that no one would mistakenly think that they were fighting for the right to keep slaves.
15. In fact, both Lee and Jackson spoke out against slavery, nor is there any record of either of them speaking poorly of Negroes (the same could not be said of Lincoln and Grant).[3] In fact, General Grant

Slavery and the United States

kept his own slaves until the 13th Amendment had been passed, after the end of the Civil War.[3]

16. This is not to assert that slavery was not an institutionalized evil nor that there were not acts of abuse and cruelty done to slaves.
17. This is also not to say that slavery was not an issue in the Civil War. The Confederate Constitution sought to codify slavery in its constitution. The constitutional convention specifically left the practice of slavery out of our United States Constitution.
18. There were moral failings on both sides of the Civil War. The North functioned with great self-righteousness; and the South attempted to codify the immoral practice of slavery in their constitution (immoral because it involved taking free men and enslaving them, which act the Bible specifically teaches as being wrong).
    1) This self-righteousness still exists today. In my study of this topic, I came across a discussion thread about Jackson, Lee and slavery, and the self-righteousness of many of the contributors was quite palpable.
    2) When you are born into an environment where slavery exists, it is normal to accept it as a fact of life. Some people struggled with the fact of slavery, as did Stonewall Jackson, but you cannot take the societal values of today and self-righteously impose them on people from over 150 years ago.
19. It is a false notion that our Constitution treated Blacks as 3/5ths of a person.
    1) This represents a great misconception, and something which is continually misrepresented in our schools and in political discourse.
    2) Slave states wanted to count slaves as an entire person, so that they (the states) would have a better representation in Congress.
    3) Free states argued that, if slaves were merely property, then they ought not be counted at all, thus giving slave states less representation in Congress.
    4) So, slave states wanted slaves to count as a full person. Free states wanted slaves to count as property and not as people.
    5) The 3/5ths compromise codified this fundamental disagreement in such a way that, Black slaves ought to be recognized as people; however, as long as there was slavery, slaves could not be counted as a complete person, thus reducing the South's representation and power in Congress.
    6) Reducing the South's representation in Congress would likely eventuate in the abolishment of slavery, which is what the non-slave state representatives wanted.
    7) Black freedmen, in the north and in the south, counted as an entire person.
20. Most argue that slavery would have died a natural death in the United States (as it had in Britain) without the Civil War. Britain began, in the late 1700's, to deal with slavery in the courts, and then, in the early 1800's, legislatively with the 1807 Slave Trade Act and the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act (Christian groups like the Quakers played a very active part in this). It is not just possible, but likely, that slavery in the United States would have died out on its own, as was occurring in many countries throughout the world.

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Slavery in the United States—An Addendum

1. Today, American Blacks who are descended from slaves could, at any given point in time, choose to renounce their American citizenship and move to any African country they desired. Any Black person in American can, after saving up for a year or two, be financially able to do this. Although I am certain that there must be one or two which do this each year, 99.9% of American Blacks have no interest in becoming the citizens of some African country (I just made that percentage up; but we have no mass exodus from the United States to Africa).
2. You may count slavery among the great evils in our country; yet, the descendants of slaves don't want to return to Africa. They may take on so-called African names, dress, and pretend that they feel this deep association with Africa; but they are not going to go to Africa to live. It would be psychotic to move from

Slavery in the United States—An Addendum

the greatest country in the world to some of the very worst countries in the world.

3. Our current president, Barack Obama, has been back to Kenya, the birthplace of his father. He had the wherewithal at any point in time to live in Kenya; the country of his father. He went to a school in Indonesia, and he could have chosen to, at any point in his adult life, to return to Indonesia and apply for citizenship there. Like any rational person, he chose to remain a United States citizen.
4. On the other hand, there are millions of Blacks in Africa who would move here to the United States in a moment's notice if given half a chance (and many do, moving here both legally and illegally).
5. One of the great contrasts is President Barrack Obama and his Kenyan half-brother. The President makes millions of dollars a year because of royalties from his books; on the other hand, his half-brother in Kenya makes less than $25/year. Fundamental to the difference between these two half-brothers is where they were born. While such a contrast is not typical, but it is certainly illustrative, and we would be hard-pressed to find examples where such income disparity is reversed.
6. In what is one of the great classical cases of irony in American history, many Blacks have adopted the religion of Islam (particularly in the 70's and 80's) to show their disconnect with Christianity and Americanism. Many adopted Muslim names to give an outward show of their severance from Christianity and the United States. These converts ignored the fact that, Muslims were the slave dealers who captured and sold the slaves who were brought to the United States. They also ignore the fact that many slaves were saved because their masters (or members of their family or by missionaries to the slaves) led them to Jesus Christ.
7. And, despite turning their backs on their Christian heritage, very few U.S. Muslim Blacks have chosen to return to whatever country of origin that they believe is theirs. Even an American Black practicing Islam in the United States—someone who may rail against the injustices inherent in the American institutions—still recognizes that he is far better off in the United States than trying to make a life in a Muslim country.
8. The strongest forces against the American institution of slavery in the 1850's were Christians. Christianity believes that Jesus Christ died for all mankind, and that color is not an issue when it comes to salvation.
9. While there are still some Blacks today who are desirous of reparations (welfare on steroids), they fail to take into consideration that 600,000 men died in the Civil War; in part, to secure their freedom. Having someone die so that you might be free is something which American Blacks ought to be taught is a true sacrifice, offered on their behalf, and far more significant than reparations.
10. Some base their claim of reparations on the Bible, where the Egyptians paid reparations to the Jews. However, these reparations were paid directly by the masters to the slaves, not to their descendants who had never been slaves.
11. National, institutionalized slavery died a natural death in many nations during this time period. However, because this is the devil's world, many forms of slavery still exist today in this world.
12. We have a different type of slavery today, where whites are enslaved to Black women, who make up a disproportionate part of our welfare and section 8 rolls. Huge portions of our tax dollars—federal and state—are given over to fatherless Black families (and other groups as well, of course). So, for decades, we have been, in a sense, enslaved to the state and federal governments, working the first half of the year in order to pay our taxes, much of it going to people who could work, but do not.
13. In the ancient world, if Israel, say, defeated Moab in war, then Moab would pay tribute (taxes) to Israel for the next few decades.
14. One might define slavery as you working and someone else takes and enjoys the remuneration for your work.
15. For all intents and purposes, we have people working and paying inordinate taxes (inordinate by Biblical standards), and a large percentage of this money is distributed to those who are not working (most of whom could work[4]). This is a form of institutionalized slavery. However, it is not our job as believers in Jesus Christ to disobey the law in order to throw off these bonds of slavery.
16. The institution of slavery in America was detrimental to America from its founding. However, just as detrimental to our national fabric today are people who do not work and collect money from those who do. As discussed in the laws of divine establishment, one of the most important aspects of life is work. That is the lifeblood and vibrancy, to some degree, of the nation.

Slavery in the United States—An Addendum

17. In any case, the believer is to live in the world in which he finds himself; we are not told in the Bible that we need to improve the devil's world (John 16:11 2Cor. 4:4 1John 5:19). No matter what we attempt to do as individuals or as a movement, we will never establish perfect environment on this earth.
18. In every generation, there are evils in this world, in our nation and on our streets. It is not necessarily our mission as believers to go out and try to fix all of these evils. In the devil's world, evil is simply a part of it.
19. God has a purpose for each and every believer in this world, which purpose we begin to understand by growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Bible accepts slavery as an institutional fact (it has been a fact of human history for no less than 4000 years). Paul urges those who are saved while in slavery do not seek to be free; but, if freed, to use their freedom wisely for Jesus Christ. When dealing with a runaway slave, Paul tells the slave to return to his master; yet, in the letter sent to his master, urges him to set his slave free (1Cor. 7:21 the book of Philemon).

Christianity is not a faith designed to make the devil's world better. It is a faith which ultimately separates the believer from this world (which is the cosmic system under Satan's control). We will be associated with the newly established earth in the Millennium.

Therefore, individual Christians may be involved in various political movements or have various political points of view (apart from revolution). However, the thrust of Christianity is not to change the world in which we live. Christianity changes the believer from the inside out. The mature believer is changed by his thinking (Rom. 12:2). Although Christianity can affect great social change (which includes the abolition of slavery), that is never to be the thrust of Christianity. We are not put on this earth to improve the devil's world; or to rearrange the furniture on the deck of the Titanic.

However, as believers in a democracy, we should support those things which line up with the **laws of divine establishment** and oppose those things which don't. This will make the United States an even greater country, which promotes both evangelization and spiritual growth.

[1] Dictionary of Afro-American slavery; Randall M. Miller, John David Smith; p. 150.
[2] **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_Jackson** accessed February 8, 2012.
[3] **http://www.newswithviews.com/baldwin/baldwin632.htm** accessed February 8, 2012.
[4] In my life, I have known dozens of people who receive assistance from the government in a number of ways—social security benefits paid to those in their 30's; housing benefits paid to people in their 20's, 30's and 40's; and welfare and food stamp benefits. In very few of those instances can I identify a person who would have gone hungry and homeless if their benefits had been cut off.
Other references include:
http://www.negrospirituals.com/ accessed November 1, 2011.
http://www.everystudent.com/features/truth.html accessed November 1, 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_slave_trade accessed November 1, 2011.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

He, a circumcision, will be circumcised, born of your home and a purchase of your silver. And has been My covenant in your flesh for a covenant of perpetuity.	Genesis 17:13	**The one born in your home or purchased with your money will definitely be circumcised. Therefore, My covenant concerning your flesh stands [lit., *is*] [as] a perpetual covenant.**

The one born in your home or purchased with your money will be, without exception, circumcised. Therefore, My covenant with your flesh stands as a perpetual covenant.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	He who is circumcised shall circumcise him who is brought up among you, or bought with your silver; and it shall be My covenant in your flesh for a covenant for ever.
Latin Vulgate	And my covenant shall be in your flesh for a perpetual covenant.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	He, a circumcision, will be circumcised, born of your home and a purchase of your silver. And has been My covenant in your flesh for a covenant of perpetuity.
Peshitta (Syriac)	He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your money, shall be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
Septuagint (Greek)	He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with money shall surely be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
Significant differences:	The *he* of this verse can be taken from the previous verse; and it is implied by the verb. The targum presents a unique approach to this verse. The Latin seems to take the position that words of the previous verse were repeated and not necessary (or the manuscripts that they worked with lacked those words). The Greek and Syriac are quite close to the Hebrew; their English translators simply rearrange the words to be more consistent with the English.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Be sure you circumcise those born in your household and those purchased with your silver. Your flesh will embody my covenant as an enduring covenant.
Easy English (Pocock)	You must *circumcise everyone. You must *circumcise all those that are born in your house. And you must *circumcise all those that you buy. In that way, my *covenant will be in your body. It is a *covenant that will last for always.
Easy-to-Read Version	So every baby boy in your nation will be circumcised. Every boy that is born from your family or bought as a slave will be circumcised.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Each one must be circumcised, and this will be a physical sign to show that my covenant with you is everlasting.
The Message	Make sure you circumcise both your own children and anyone brought in from the outside. That way my covenant will be cut into your body, a permanent mark of my permanent covenant.
New Berkeley Version	...without exception, home-born or bought with money, he must be circumcised. So shall My covenant be marked in your flesh, a never-ending covenant.
New Century Version	Circumcise every baby boy whether he is born in your family or bought as a slave. Your bodies will be marked to show that you are part of my agreement that lasts forever.
New Life Bible	He that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money must have this religious act done. So will My agreement be marked in your flesh, an agreement that lasts forever.
New Living Translation	All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'Those who are born in your house and those who are bought with money must surely be circumcised. And My Sacred Agreement will be there in their flesh as [a sign of the] Sacred Agreement through the ages.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Circumcise those born in your house and bought with your silver. My covenant is with your flesh as a covenant forever.

Christian Community Bible	...those born in your household or bought from a foreigner to be slaves. Whether born in your household or bought to be slaves, they must be circumcised. So my covenant will be written in your flesh as an everlasting covenant..
God's Word™	Every male born in your household or bought with your money is to be circumcised without exception. So my promise will be a sign on your flesh, an everlasting promise.
New American Bible	Yes, both the houseborn slaves and those acquired with money must be circumcised. Thus my covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant.
NIRV	Any male who is born in your house or bought with your money must be circumcised. "My covenant will last forever. Your body will have the mark of my covenant on it.
New Jerusalem Bible	Whether born within the household or bought, they must be circumcised. My covenant must be marked in your flesh as a covenant in perpetuity.
Revised English Bible	Circumcise both those born in your house and those you guy, thus your flesh will be marked with the sign of my everlasting covenant.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	He who comes to birth in your house and he who is made yours for a price, all are to undergo circumcision; so that my agreement may be marked in your flesh, an agreement for all time.
Conservapedia	Anyone born in your household, or bought and paid for by you, must be circumcised, and My covenant will be in your flesh and will hold forever.
The Expanded Bible	Circumcise every baby boy whether he is born in your ·family [└house] or bought ·as a slave [└with money from a foreigner]. ·Your bodies will be marked to show that you are part of my agreement [└.so that my covenant/treaty might be in your flesh as a covenant/treaty] that lasts forever.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Whoever is the child of your own family, or bought for money, shall be circumcised; and it is My Covenant in your body as an everlasting bond.
HCSB	...a slave born in your house, as well as one purchased with money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant.
New Advent Bible	And my covenant shall be in your flesh for a perpetual covenant.
NET Bible®	They must indeed be circumcised [tn The emphatic construction employs the Niphal imperfect tense (collective singular) and the Niphal infinitive.], whether born in your house or bought with money. The sign of my covenant [Heb "my covenant." Here in v. 13 the Hebrew word תִּיהְֹב (bÿrit) refers to the outward, visible sign, or reminder, of the covenant. For the range of meaning of the term, see the note on the word "requirement" in v. 9.] will be visible in your flesh as a permanent [Or "an eternal."] reminder.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	...he who births in your house and he who is a chattel of silver, in circumcising, certainly circumcise: that my covenant becomes in your flesh for an eternal covenant:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...they must be circumcised, homeborn and purchased alike. Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact.
Kaplan Translation	[All slaves,] both houseborn and purchased with your money must be circumcised. This shall be My covenant in your flesh, an eternal covenant.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	He that is born in thy bais, and he that is bought with thy kesef, must be circumcised; and My Brit shall be in your basar for a Brit Olam.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	He that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money must be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
Concordant Literal Version	With circumcision shall be circumcised the homeborn and the one acquired with your money. And My covenant comes to be in your flesh for a covenant eonian.
Context Group Version	He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must surely be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your { pl } flesh for an everlasting covenant.
English Standard Version	...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.
LTHB	The child of your house and the purchase of your money circumcising must be circumcised. And My covenant shall be in your flesh for a perpetual covenant.
New RSV	Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.
Syndein	He who is born { yaliyd} in the house { bayth}, or bought {miqnah} with money {keceph} {each male child} must keep on being circumcised. My covenant shall be in your 'male sex-organ'/flesh {basar} for an everlasting covenant.
Webster's Bible Translation	He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
World English Bible	He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
Young's Updated LT	He is certainly circumcised who is born in your house, or bought with your money; and My covenant has become in your flesh a covenant age-during.

The gist of this verse: All males born on Abraham's compound or purchased as slaves were to be circumcised, that circumcision stands as their agreement to this covenant

Genesis 17:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
It is possible that this word, from the end of v. 12 actually belongs with v. 13.			
hûwʾ (אוּה) [pronounced *hoo*]	*he, it; himself* as a demonstrative pronoun: *that, this*	3rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
This pronoun can be used in the emphatic sense. Sometimes, the verb *to be* is implied when this pronoun is used.			
Hûwʾ is also used as a masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun and is rendered *that; this*.			
mûwl (לוּם) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	Niphal infinitive absolute	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
When a verb is doubled, this is the Hebrew mode of expressing intensity, repetition, or emphasis.			

Genesis 17:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The **infinitive absolute** has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add *ing* to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.[15]			
A Qal infinitive absolute is a verb which can act like noun, a verb or an adverb. Generally it takes the place of a noun and serves to intensify meanings. When used as a complement of affirmation, it may be rendered *surely, indeed, definitely;* and when it is a complement of improbability and condition, we render it *at all, freely, indeed*. The Qal infinitive absolute can also serve as an adverbial complement; or, as a verb, it can replace finite verbs, imperatives, participles, and the infinitive constructs.[16]			
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
yâlîyd (דִילָי) [pronounced *yaw-LEED*]	*born;* possibly *son*	verbal adjective; masculine singular adjective construct	Strong's #3211 BDB #409
bayith (תַיִב) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]	*house, residence; household, habitation* as well as *inward*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (ְו or ו) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
miq^{e}nâh (הָנְקִמ) [pronounced *mihk-NAW*]	*a purchase, a buying; a document of purchase; cost, price, a purchase-price*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #4736 BDB #889
keçeph (ףֶסֶכ) [pronounced *KEH-sef*]	*silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents*	masculine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3701 BDB #494

Translation: The one born in your home or purchased with your money will definitely be circumcised. God emphasizes that, whether a person is born in your home or whether they were purchased as a slave, they must be circumcised. The doubling of the verb here makes this verb intense in its meaning; here, indicating that this is required; there are no exceptions.

When people were brought into the fold of the Jews—regardless of how it took place, God wanted them to believe in Him. Therefore, even slaves were brought into their religious practices.

God becomes very specific with Abraham as to when circumcision will be done and that it is done to all those born Jews and all of those who are bought as slaves and brought into the house as *family*. In v. 13 we have the doubling of the word *circumcised* first in the Niphal infinitive absolute (which is a verbal noun in the passive sense; *he that is being circumcised*) and then in the Niphal imperfect, 3rd masculine singular (again, the passive sense, but the subject is the singular masculine, referring to a young male or a slave). The most common meaning of

[15] *Biblical Hebrew;* Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

[16] Taken from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament;* Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

the doubling of a verb is strong emphasis. God promised Abraham that He would revive his dead phallus and that Abraham would have a son by Sarai, and every time that Abraham was to urinate, he would be reminded of that promise that God made to him. Every Jew will see his own phallus as a memorial to this promise. This is quite simply why the rite of circumcision is not a part of the Christian life—it pertains quite simply and quite specifically to Israel and the physical descendants of Abraham and to God's specific promise to Abraham.

In v. 13, the word *flesh* is used to separate man from all other things, created and divine. This covenant has nothing to do with the animal kingdom, with angels or with any other creature, if there are any. It is strictly a covenant with man. Furthermore, the term emphasizes man's physical body here (although it can emphasize his weakness and the old sin nature).

Genesis 17:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
With a voluntative, cohortative or jussive, the wâw conjunction means *that, so that*. It expresses *intention*. The wâw conjunction can express informal inference or consequence (*so, then, therefore*); especially at the beginning of a speech. The wâw conjunction can connect alternative cases or contrasting ideas and be properly rendered *or, but, yet*. The wâw conjunction can also be rendered *for*.			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b^{e}rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning*	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*]	*flesh; body; animal meat*	masculine singular noun with a 2nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1320 BDB #142
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
b^{e}rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
ʿôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced *ǵo-LAWM*]	properly *what is hidden [time]; of [in] times past, from ancient time, old, antiquity, long duration, forever, perpetuity; for future time, futurity; of the world, worldly*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Translation: Therefore, My covenant concerning your flesh stands [lit., *is*] [as] a perpetual covenant. This covenant which God is making with Abram will stand as a perpetual covenant. It is difficult to translate the 2nd person masculine plural suffix, so that the reader understands that this is perpetual; it goes forever to all those who are descendants of Abram or who have been associated with the Jews via slavery. We may reasonably interpret this to include those who have chosen to associate themselves with the Jews as well.

Again, *Jew* is a nice simple term, not yet used in the Bible.

Genesis 17:13 (graphic) from **Storyline of the Bible**; accessed December 6, 2013. The translation My covenant in your flesh shall be for an everlasting covenant, is from Robert Alter's *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*. The translation My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant; is from the NIV.

Gen 17:12–13 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, 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.

Despite a person being sold or born into slavery, God treated them as people who had rights. He expected Jews to teach them the rituals of Jehovah worship, which would lead them to an understanding of the gospel (as presented in the Old Testament), so that they might believe in Jehovah Elohim and be saved (as per Gen. 15:6). Circumcision represents a rebirth or regeneration, so this, along with many other Jewish rituals, taught the Jews and their slaves about their place in this world and their relationship to the Creator or the Heavens and Earth.

As already pointed out, circumcision is only done to males. There is no female circumcision in the Bible. Female circumcision is a barbaric practice; it is genital mutilation and an attempt to further enslave women to men.

Here is what we have covered so far:

Gen 17:1–12a When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations." I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.

One of the keys to a passage like this is understanding why God had the males circumcised, and we discussed this at length, that circumcision is a sign of regeneration and that regeneration means that our human spirit—that

part of us which can commune with God—is reborn. We are all born physically alive but spiritually dead. We have no ability to commune with God in our natural or soulish state. Similarly, all men are born uncircumcised, which represents being born spiritually dead. Circumcision represents our spiritual regeneration, which is being made alive spiritually and able to commune with God.

I like the New Living Translation of v. 12: From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. Although the New Living Translation does not give a careful word-for-word translation, it sometimes conveys an accurate understanding not quite found in the careful word-for-word translations. If you are looking for a very readable Bible, I found the New Living Translation to be among the best.

Let's look at the latter half of v. 12 combined with v. 13:

Gen 17:12b–13 Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, 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.

Regeneration is designed for all mankind. God worked through the nation Israel then much as God works through certain nations today (e.g., the United States, South Korea) to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Some men were sent out (like Jonah) and some people gravitated toward Israel (like Ruth the Moabite or the Queen of Sheba) and some became a part of Israel through slavery.

At this particular point in time, there is no Israel; there is Abraham, the father of the Jews, and God has appeared to him again to restate His covenant with Abraham and to add the circumcision clause.

Foreigners brought into the nation Israel, whether of their own accord (like Ruth) or those taken in slavery, were to become a part of this covenant that God was making with Abraham. As we will find out, every man in Abraham's camp would be circumcised. God's identification with his people was to be cut into their flesh.

Circumcision was the ritual. The act and affects of circumcision are real and they last a lifetime; just as regeneration is real and it lasts forever. You cannot be un-circumcised (going from circumcision to uncircumcision) just as you cannot be un-regenerated. Once you have trusted in Jesus Christ—an act which takes a few moments—you are forever regenerated; you are forever saved.

What God is doing is establishing a new race of people. Up until now, men were descended from Shem, Ham or Japheth, and there were essentially 3 races of people. God herein will establish a new race, the Jewish race, whose foundation will be regeneration.

Therefore, what we have is all of these people scattered all over the earth; but there is this one group of people who have been regenerated, born again. These people have the potential of having fellowship with God. God has given them a sign—the sign of circumcision, which differentiates them from other peoples. Again, no one could look and see if you are circumcised, under normal conditions, just as no one can look at you and superficially determine whether or not you have been born again.

Although we do not have the word *Jew* yet, we do have the word *Hebrew,* by which this new people will be known. Abraham was called a Hebrew in Gen. 14:13, and that designation comes down to us even today (although our pronunciation is quite different).

———————————

And a foreskinned male who has not circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and has cut off the soul the that from her peoples. My covenant he has broken."	Genesis 17:14	**When [there is] a foreskinned male who has not circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, then that soul will be cut off from his people [lit., *her peoples*]. He has broken My covenant."**

When an uncircumcised male has not circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, then his soul will be cut off from his people because He has broken My covenant."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, unless he have some one to circumcise him, that man shall be cut off from his people; he has made My covenent to pass away.
Latin Vulgate	The male whose flesh of his foreskin shall not be circumcised, that soul shall be destroyed out of his people: because he has broken my covenant.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And a foreskinned male who has not circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and has cut off the soul the that from her peoples. My covenant he has broken."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; for he has broken my covenant.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the uncircumcised male, who shall not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from his family [generation, race], for he has broken My covenant.

Significant differences:

The Latin uses the same words in the first phrase, but they are mixed up (e.g., the relative pronoun is placed between *male* and *flesh*). This could simply be the English translation which has done this.

The Greek adds in *on the eighth day*. None of the other ancient translation have this; and it is not even suggested in the targum. However, the targum adds the phrase, *unless he have someone to circumcise him,* which is possibly added by way of interpretation. That is, okay, someone is uncircumcised, but it was not his fault; no one circumcised him.

Almost every English translation from an ancient language has *his people* rather than *her peoples;* this will be explained in the exegesis.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Any man who isn't circumcised hasn't kept his promise to me and cannot be one of my people.
Easy English (Pocock)	If any male has not received *circumcision of his *foreskin, his family shall not consider him its member any longer. That man has not obeyed my *covenant.'
Easy-to-Read Version	{Abraham, this is the agreement between you and me:} Any male that is not circumcised will be cut off from his people. [97] Why? Because that person has broken my agreement."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Any male who has not been circumcised will no longer be considered one of my people, because he has not kept the covenant with me."
The Message	An uncircumcised male, one who has not had the foreskin of his penis cut off, will be cut off from his people--he has broken my covenant."
New Berkeley Version	The uncircumcised male, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised, that person shall be eliminated from his people; he has broken My covenant.

New Century Version	Any male who is not circumcised will be cut off from his people, because he has broken my agreement."
New Life Bible	But the man who has not had this religious act done, of cutting off his piece of skin, will be cut off from his people. He has broken My agreement."
New Living Translation	Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	As for the uncircumcised males who aren't circumcised in the flesh of their foreskin on the eighth day; such individuals must be totally destroyed from among their families for breaking My Sacred Agreement!'
Ancient Roots Translinear	The uncircumcised male, with the flesh of his foreskin not circumcised, voids my covenant. He cuts his soul from his people."
Christian Community Bible	Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people for having broken my covenant.”.
God's Word™	Any uncircumcised male must be excluded from his people because he has rejected my promise."
New American Bible	If a male is uncircumcised, that is, if the flesh of his foreskin has not been cut away, such a one will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.
Revised English Bible	Every uncircumcised male, everyone who has not had the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, will be cut off from the kin of his father; he has broken my covenant.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And any male who does not undergo circumcision will be cut off from his people: my agreement has been broken by him.
Conservapedia	If any man-child among your descendants refuses to be circumcised, that person will be cut off from his people for breaking My covenant."
The Expanded Bible	Any [└uncircumcised] male ·who [└whose foreskin] is not circumcised will be cut off from his people, because he has broken my ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18]."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But the degraded male who has not been circumcised shall then become separated from My people, because he has broken the covenant.”
HCSB	If any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."
New Advent Bible	The male whose flesh of his foreskin shall not be circumcised, that soul shall be destroyed out of his people: because he has broken my covenant.
NET Bible®	Any uncircumcised male [tn The disjunctive clause calls attention to the "uncircumcised male" and what will happen to him.] who has not been circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin will be cut off [tn Heb "that person will be cut off." The words "that person" have not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons. sn The meaning of "cut off" has been discussed at great length. An entire tractate in the Mishnah is devoted to this subject (tractate Keritot). Being ostracized from the community is involved at the least, but it is not certain whether this refers to the death penalty.] from his people — he has failed to carry out my requirement [Heb “he has broken my covenant.” The noun תִּיהְָב (bÿrit) here refers to the obligation required by God in conjunction with the covenantal agreement. For the range of meaning of the term, see the note on the word “requirement” in v. 9.]."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	...and the uncircumcised male whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul becomes cut off from his people;

	he broke my covenant.
Kaplan Translation	The uncircumcised male whose foreskin has not been circumcised, shall have his soul cut off from his people [This denotes being cut off from one's spiritual source. It also denotes premature death and childlessness (see Genesis 9:11).]; he has broken My covenant.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And the arel (uncircumcised) zachar whose basar of his arelah (foreskin) is not circumcised, that nefesh shall be cut off from his people; My Brit hefer (he broke).
The Scriptures 1998	"And an uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, his life shall be cut off from his people – he has broken My covenant."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenton's LXX	And the uncircumcised male, who shall not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from its family, for he has broken my covenant.
Concordant Literal Version	And the uncircumcised male, the flesh of whose foreskin was not circumcised in the eighth day, that soul also shall be cut off from his people. My covenant he annuls.
Context Group Version	And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that life { soul } shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.
Syndein	The uncircumcised {`arel} man child whose 'male sex-organ'/flesh {basar} of his foreskin {'orlah} is not circumcised, that person/soul {nephesh} shall be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant.
Third Millennium Bible	And the uncircumcised manchild whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant."
World English Bible	The uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant."
Young's Updated LT	And an uncircumcised one, a male, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised, even that person has been cut off from his people; My covenant he has broken."

The gist of this verse: Every male of Israel was to be circumcised. This was a part of the covenant between God and Israel.

Genesis 17:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿârêl (עָרֵל) [pronounced *ġaw-RAYL*]	*having foreskins, foreskinned ones;* generally rendered *uncircumcised [ones, men]*	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #6189 BDB #790
zâkâr (זָכָר) [pronounced *zaw-KAWR*]	*male, male offspring (whether animal or people);* this word is not used as a collective for males and females	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2145 BDB #271
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *uh-SHER*]	*that, which, when, who, whom*	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lôʾ (לֹא or אוֹל) [pronounced *low*]	*not, no*	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

Genesis 17:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*]	*flesh; body; animal meat*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1320 BDB #142
ʿor^{e}lâh (עָרְלָה) [pronounced *ģohr^{e}-LAW*]	*foreskin (uncircumcised); foreskin of a tree [fruit from the tree for the first 3 years]*	feminine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6190 BDB #790

Translation: When [there is] a foreskinned male who has not circumcised the flesh of his foreskin,... What about the man who refuses to be circumcised or whose parents who do not have their child circumcised? That is what this verse will deal with.

Genesis 17:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Two wâw conjunctions may continue the thought of a compound conditional sentence. ***When*** *this happens,* ***then*** *this will occur* is the idea here.			
kârath (תַּרָכ) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*]	*to be cut off; to be cut down; to be destroyed, to be consumed; to perish, to fail*	3rd person feminine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
nephesh (שֶׁפֶנ) [pronounced *NEH-fesh*]	*soul, life, living being, desire, volition*	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5315 BDB #659
hîyʾ (אִיהַ) [pronounced *hee*]	*she, it;* also used as a demonstrative pronoun: *that, this*	3rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun with the definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
min (מִן) [pronounced *min*]	*from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than*	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿammîym (מִיַּע) [pronounced *ģahm-MEEM*]	*peoples, nations; tribes [of Israel]; relatives of anyone*	masculine plural collective noun with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: ...then that soul will be cut off from his people [lit., *her peoples*]. It is the soul which is being cut off, and the word *soul* is a feminine singular word; this is why we have the feminine singular suffix.

When speaking of *peoples* rather than *people,* we are often speaking of different groups. There are at least two groups of people who will spend eternity with God: Jewish believers from the Age of Israel and Christian believers from the Church Age. These are very different groups of peoples, but with the continuity of having believed in the Son of God, Jesus Christ (or, Jehovah Elohim). Now, this is not some hidden prophecy of the Church Age; we are simply referring to Jews and gentiles who believe in the Revealed Lord.

The repetition of the word circumcision in v. 13 and the stern warning in this verse indicates that circumcision is not an option or not a suggestion, but a mandate to the Jewish race as important as any of the commandments and ordinances; in fact, more so, since this is delivered prior to the commandments and ordinances. The Jew had to take what God offered him in the covenant; a present exchanges hands if the person receiving the gift actually takes it. The person who is not circumcised is breaking the covenant between himself and God and will therefore be cut off from the covenant.

Genesis 17:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b^{e}rîyth (תִּיְרִב) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
pârar (רַפָּ) [pronounced *paw-RAHR*]	*to break, to make [or, declare] void, to make of no effect, to bring to nothing, to make ineffectual; to take away, to violate (a covenant), to frustrate*	3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #6565 BDB #830

Translation: He has broken My covenant." A man who refuses circumcision or who has not been circumcised has broken covenant with God. Circumcision is a sign of faith in Jehovah Elohim. A person was not saved because he was circumcised but because of his faith in Jehovah Elohim, he was circumcised. The circumcision was the sign of his faith.

Such a person has chosen to ignore the commands of God, which are a ritual to teach regeneration (in this instance). In most cases, this would be the fault of the parents who do not see their relationship to God as being important or defining. If the parents do not have their male children circumcised, this simply indicates that they do not see themselves as being a part of the Abrahamic covenant. A parent who did not see himself as related to God would certainly not teach his children about Y^{e}howah Elohim; so, his children would not be regenerated either.

Let me draw your attention to the phrase *his people;* this is a masculine plural noun with a 3rd person feminine singular suffix; so, even though your Bible reads *his people,* it should read *her peoples*. Any time that we find a feminine singular suffix, then we need to figure out, *to what does it refer?* The closest feminine singular noun is *covenant*. So, we are talking about the *peoples of the covenant* here. This covenant is this agreement or contract between God and Abraham. What God has done here is bind those who come after Abraham, for many generations, to this covenant. This was first made clear in v. 7: "And I will establish My covenant between Me and

you and [between Me and] **your seed** after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to **your seed** after you." One portion of this covenant now included circumcision.

The plural of *people* is also interesting. The singular form of this word is ʿam (עַם) [pronounced *ġahm*], which means, *people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]*. Strong's #5971 BDB #766. When found in the singular, ʿam is often refers to Israel (Isa. 62:12 63:18 Dan. 8:24 12:7) or to a particular non-Israeli people (Ex. 21:8 Deut. 28:32 Ezek. 3:5). It can even stand for Israel and for Gentiles in the very same context (Deut. 28:9–10). In the plural, the word is ʿammîym (עַמִּים) [pronounced *ġahm-MEEM*], which means, *peoples, nations; tribes [of Israel]; relatives of anyone*. In general, when in the plural, 99% of the time it stands for Gentile nations (Deut. 4:19, 27 6:14 13:7) or for all nations of the earth (Deut. 7:6 32:8). I mention this because it is odd to find it here with regards to the covenant. We tend to think of this covenant as being between God and Abraham and between God and Abraham's descendants, as it says here. However, this covenant of relationship, this covenant of rebirth, will be extended to many peoples and countries.

We find this in many passages, such as Acts 13:47–48 For so the Lord has commanded us, "I have set You for a Light of nations, that You be for salvation to the end of the earth." [Isa. 49:6] And hearing, the nations rejoiced and glorified the Word of the Lord. And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And Paul to King Agrippa said, "Having obtained, therefore, help from God to this day testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the Prophets and Moshe said was going to occur; that the Messiah was to suffer, and by His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the people [Israel] and to the [gentile] nations." (Acts 26:22–23).

So God knew that His covenant would be with all believers in the earth, with both gentiles and Jews. And so there is no mistake, this is not covenant theology; this is simply the proclaiming of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Jew first and then to the gentiles (Rom. 1:16). So the peoples of the covenant would not just be Abraham's seed (in which case, *people* would be in the singular), but this covenant was offered to all men from all nations.

This translation would help to explain *her peoples*.

Gen 17:14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant."

Let's pull this altogether. Circumcision refers to Abraham's sexual regeneration which speaks of his **spiritual regeneration**. So, in order to remain a part of this covenant, men had to be circumcised, which *means* they must be regenerated. No man has a relationship with God apart from being spiritually regenerated; or, as Jesus said, "You must be born again." (John 3:7b). What we find in Genesis sets the stage for all that will follow in the Bible. Genesis is the foundation for our spiritual lives and for all truth. And this covenant of relationship, this covenant of regeneration, is offered to all peoples of the earth.

Again, I do not want you to think that this is covenant theology. Covenant theology teaches that the Jews were so bad and so rebellious that God just tossed them aside and presented His gospel to the gentiles instead, and that all of His promises made to the Jews were "spiritualized" and transferred over to the church. There are several problems with this approach. First, it suggests that God was unable to look down the corridors of time and realize that the Jews would not only reject His Son, but crucify Him. However, Isa 53:3 indicates that none of this caught God off guard: He was despised and rejected by people, One Who experienced pain and was acquainted with weakness; people hid their faces from Him; He was despised, and we considered Him insignificant. So God knew what was going to happen and this was a part of His plan.

There are specific covenants made to Jews only. To the Jew specifically is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the temple service, and the promises (Rom. 9:4b). With respect to the Jews, the covenant with Abraham (and with others to follow) pertains to a specific geographical area. However, to all people, whether in the **Church Age** or in the **Age of Israel**, there is the covenant of regeneration and

relationship. The covenant of regeneration is, "You must be born again." (John 3:7b). The covenant of relationship is, You are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26).

Again, all of God's rituals had great meaning, and this meaning—that circumcision represents regeneration—would be preserved as long as the ritual was continued.

My point in all of this is that Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant;" is consistent with the rest of the Bible, with both the Old and New Testaments. Circumcision is being established at this point as a sign of regeneration and as a sign of relationship with God. It is a ritual which has meaning, which meaning was **previously discussed** in great detail.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

God Renames Sarai, as the Covenant will be Fulfilled Through Her

And so says Elohim unto Abraham, "Sarai, your woman, you will not call her name, Sarai; for Sarah her name.	Genesis 17:15	**Then Elohim said unto Abraham, "Sarai, your wife—you will no longer call her name Sarai; because Sarah [is] her name.**

Then God said to Abraham, "You will no longer call your wife Sarai; because now, Sarah is her name.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said to Abraham, The name of Sara thy wife shall be no more called Sara; for Sarah shall be her name.
Latin Vulgate	God said also to Abraham: Sarai your wife you will not call Sarai, but Sara.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Elohim unto Abraham, "Sarai, your woman, you will not call her name, Sarai; for Sarah her name.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then God said to Abraham, As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, for Sarah is her name.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God said to Abraham, Sarai, your wife — her name shall not be called Sarai, *but* Sarah her name.
Significant differences:	The Hebrew text has *God* and not *Lord,* as is found in the targum. The English translation of the Syriac adds in *as for,* possibly to smooth out the translation. The words *no more* in the targum are a reasonable understanding of the negation and the imperfect taken together. There is no verb in the final phrase; however, it is reasonable to add some form of the verb *to be,* which is implied.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Abraham, your wife's name will now be Sarah instead of Sarai.
Easy English (Pocock)	Then God said to Abraham, `Now, there is Sarai your wife. Do not call her Sarai any longer. Call her Sarah.

Easy-to-Read Version	God said to Abraham, “I will give Sarai [Sarai A name, probably Aramaic, meaning "princess."], your wife, a new name. Her new name will be Sarah [Sarah A Hebrew name meaning "princess."].
Good News Bible (TEV)	God said to Abraham, "You must no longer call your wife Sarai; from now on her name is Sarah.
The Message	God continued speaking to Abraham, "And Sarai your wife: Don't call her Sarai any longer; call her Sarah.
New Century Version	God said to Abraham, "I will change the name of Sarai [Sarai An Aramaic name meaning "princess."], your wife, to Sarah [Sarah A Hebrew name meaning "princess."].
New Living Translation	Then God said to Abraham, "Regarding Sarai, your wife-her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah [Sarai and Sarah both mean "princess"; the change in spelling may reflect the difference in dialect between Ur and Canaan.].

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	God said to Abraham, "Do not call Sarai your woman by her name 'Sarai', but name her 'Sarah' (princess).
God’s Word™	God said to Abraham, "Don't call your wife by the name Sarai anymore. Instead, her name is Sarah [Princess].

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And God said, As for Sarai, your wife, from now her name will be not Sarai, but Sarah.
Conservapedia	Then God told Abraham, "About your wife Sarai: you won't be calling her Sarai anymore. Sarah will be her name. The name Sarai means "princess"; Sarah means "noblewoman."
The Expanded Bible	**Isaac-the Promised Son** God said to Abraham, "I will change the name of Sarai [[C]meaning "princess" in her native dialect; 11:29], your wife, to Sarah [[C]also meaning "princess," but in a dialect of Canaan, signifying her transition to the Promised Land].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	GOD further said to Abraham, “Sarai, your wife, shall no more be called by the name of Sarai, for Sarah shall be her name;...
HCSB	God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah will be her name.
NET Bible®	Then God said to Abraham, "As for your wife, you must no longer call her Sarai [tn Heb "[As for] Sarai your wife, you must not call her name Sarai, for Sarah [will be] her name."]; Sarah [sn Sarah. The name change seems to be a dialectical variation, both spellings meaning "princess" or "queen." Like the name Abram, the name Sarai symbolized the past. The new name Sarah, like the name Abraham, would be a reminder of what God intended to do for Sarah in the future.] will be her name.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	God said to Avraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are not to call her Sarai [mockery]; her name is to be Sarah [princess].
exeGeses companion Bible	And Elohim says to Abraham, As for Saray your woman, call not her name Saray, for her name is Sarah:...
Kaplan Translation	*Fulfillment* God said to Abraham, 'Sarai your wife - do not call her by the name Sarai, for Sarah is her name.

Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Elohim said unto Avraham, As for Sarai thy isha, thou shalt not call her shem Sarai, but Sarah (Princess) shall her shem be.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And God said to Abraham, As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai; but Sarah [Princess] her name shall be.
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is the Elohim to Abraham, "Sarai, your wife--you shall not call her name Sarai, for Sarah is her name.
Modern KJV	And God said to Abraham, As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name *shall be* Sarah.
Syndein	And God said unto Abraham, "As for Sarai {means contentious} your wife/woman {ishshah}, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah {means princess} . . . {shall be her} name {shem}."
Young's Updated LT	And God says unto Abraham, "Sarai your wife—you will not call her name Sarai, for Sarah is her name.

The gist of this verse: God renames Sarai.

Genesis 17:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*]	*to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾĔlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced *ehl*]	*unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to*	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾAbᵉrâhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahbᵛᵉ-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: Then Elohim said unto Abraham,... What we have supposed is, Abraham has not recorded all that God said to him. It is possible, if not likely, that throughout the times God spoke to Abraham, he did not remember each and everything that God said, but recorded the essence of it. I will continue to make that assumption, although I cannot back it up at this time.

This is v. 9a exactly, word-for-word.

Suddenly, God appears to go off onto another topic. Did God speak more about circumcision? Did God repeat any of the covenant to Abraham? We don't know. However, His words in v. 14 come to an end, and then God is speaking to Abraham again in this verse. This suggests either a pause, missing material, commentary by Abraham, or a new topic altogether.

Genesis 17:15b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
Sâray (שָׂרַי) [pronounced *saw-RAY* or *saw-RAH-ee*]	*my princess, nobility;* transliterated *Sarai*	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #8297 BDB #979
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced *eesh-SHAW*]	*woman, wife*	feminine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
lôʾ (לֹא or אוֹל) [pronounced *low*]	*not, no*	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
qârâʾ (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*]	*to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name* [when followed by a lâmed]	2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced *shame*]	*name, reputation, character*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Sâray (שָׂרַי) [pronounced *saw-RAY* or *saw-RAH-ee*]	*my princess, nobility;* transliterated *Sarai*	feminine singular proper noun; pausal form	Strong's #8297 BDB #979
Here, as in many other places, Owen calls this the pausal form, but I see no difference between the word here and at the beginning of v. 15b.			

Translation: ..."Sarai, your wife—you will no longer call her name Sarai;... Now God speaks to Abraham about Sarai, his wife (or, *woman*). The negation along with the imperfect tense of a verb can be reasonably translated *no longer*. So, for 30 or 40 years—however, long Abraham has known Sarai, he has known her by the name Sarai. Yet, at this point in time, both Abram and Sarai will have new names: Abraham and Sarah.

God very occasionally renames a person—Abraham, Sarah and Paul being the chief examples of persons who God renamed. This is not a call to go out and change your name if you have just become a Christian; Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 90; they have both been saved for decades.

Let's say that you read the verse, "You are a new creature in Christ," and therefore, decide to change your name in order to reflect this being-a-new-creature status. That is superficial and silly. God would much rather than you learn what it means to be a new creature rather than to give yourself a new name.

Genesis 17:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (יִכ) [pronounced *kee*]	*for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time*	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Sârâh (הָרָשׂ) [pronounced *saw-RAW*]	*princess, noble woman;* transliterated *Sarah*	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
shêm (מֵש) [pronounced *shame*]	*name, reputation, character*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027

Translation: ...because Sarah [is] her name. Nowhere does God say, "Her *new* name is Sarah" or "I have *renamed* her Sarah." This simply reads, "Because Sarah [is] her name."

However, this is not any reason for some church to take in new members, and, as a part of the membership ceremony (if there is one), give the person a new name. I mean, what the heck is the pastor going to do? "You know, you look like a 'Rex' to me; don't know why; just that, when I first saw you, I thought, 'Hey, there's Rex.'" That is goofy and pastors (or, in most cases, cult leaders) ought to be renamed and remembered with the name *Goofy* or *Dipwad* or *Hasn't-got-a-clue*. Even though the Bible records a few instances where God changes the name of a person; and even though I suspect that there are many more instances where God the Holy Spirit gave a different name to this or that person and that is how we remember them, there is nothing whatsoever in the Bible to indicate that churches or cults ought to be in the business of renaming people. I realize that this hits just a tiny fraction of people—mostly those who are in cults—but cults tend to take little things from Scripture, and blow them way out of proportion.

I did know a guy out from one of these cults, and I vaguely recall talking about this renaming stuff in passing (this was about 40 years ago). Years later, this guy changed his name to a woman's name (or, in the alternative, he just happened to have one very unattractive sister with a similar name).

R. B. Thieme, Jr. has always taught that Sarai means *contentious, bitch;* and that *Sarah* means *princess*. However, I have been unable to confirm this for the name *Sarai*. Many times in the Hebrew, proper nouns are identical to specific words or it is clear that they come from specific words. Not so with *Sarai*. Sâray (יַרָשׂ) [pronounced *saw-RAY* or *saw-RAH-ee*] is possibly taken from the noun *sar,* which means *prince, leader, commander*. The yodh ending is then taken as the 1st person masculine singular suffix, so that gives us *my prince, my leader, my commander*. Although a lexicon with feminize this and say it is *my princess,* there is no feminine ending to her name. When her name becomes *Sarah,* that hê ending "feminizes" her name in the Hebrew.

I want you to think back on two incidents. Sarai told Abraham that he needed to have sex with her personal servant, Hagar. Abraham obeyed her. Later, she was pissy about Hagar and her pregnancy, and she was mad at Abraham for having impregnated her. So, Abraham finally says, "Look, you do whatever you want with her; she is your servant girl." So twice, Abraham is recorded as taking orders from Sarai; and both times, this obedience on Abraham's part was clearly a mistake. In this way, Sarai was acting as Abraham's *prince* or *leader*. So, had Abraham said, "She is your servant girl, Sarai; do whatever you want with her;" he would be essentially saying, "She is your servant girl, my leader [my prince]; do whatever you want with her."

However, if Sarai's name is now *Sarah,* then Abraham no longer calls her *my prince* but he calls her *princess*. God has feminized this woman. And what is more feminine than having a child?

Now let's look at this piece by piece:

Gen 17:15a And God said to Abraham, "Sarai, your wife—you will no longer call her name Sarai;... Now God speaks to Abraham about Sarai, his wife (or, *woman*). The negation along with the imperfect tense of a verb can be reasonably translated *no longer*. So, for 30 or 40 years—however, long Abraham has known Sarai, he has known her by the name Sarai (*my prince*). Yet, at this point in time, both Abram and Sarai will have new names: Abraham and Sarah, by which they will be known forever more.

The new names both mean something and they represent their rebirth; God has added to their name just as He has added human spirits to their persons. Sarah and Abraham have been regenerated for awhile; they have had human spirits for awhile now; but the beginning of the fulfillment of the promises will now begin to kick in for these people with new names. Their relationship with God will no longer be some promise off in the future, but these promises will begin to be fulfilled.

Gen 17:15b...because Sarah [is] her name. Nowhere does God say, "Her *new* name is Sarah" or "I have *renamed* her Sarah." This simply reads, "Because Sarah [is] her name." This strikes me as being interesting, so let me offer up a theory. We are known, generally, by the name the our parents gave us: Charley Brown. However, God "remembers" us in a different way. There are very likely people in the Bible who had one name at birth, but, without fanfare or even a mention, are given a different name in the Bible. That is, God the Holy Spirit recalls a person by a slightly different name. Although this is not a great example, few of us think back on President Roosevelt (the second Roosevelt president) by his full name. Most of us know him by FDR. Even though these are simply the initials of his name, it is how many people recall him. That may be the case for many names in the Bible. Some are renamed so that we know about it (Abraham, Sarah, Peter and Paul), but it is very likely that some people were given a different name in Scripture because God wanted us to remember them with that name and what the name signified. So, from time to time, we are going to come across this or that old Bible guy, and it will appear that his name is very apt. From what happens in his life, we may think to ourselves, "this name makes a lot of sense; he does act just like a *Charley Brown*." That is probably because God the Holy Spirit chose for the writer of that portion of Scripture to give him a more descriptive name, often one that is a play on his given name from birth.

I state this with some hesitancy: *Abram* and *Sarai* are their names as unregenerated; and *Abraham* and *Sarah* are their names as having been born again. As they are born again, they are given new names for the Kingdom of God, just as a child is given a name when he (or she) is born. Again, these new names did not come at the same time as their rebirth; but the new names come with the circumcision (which signifies the new birth) and with the pregnancy of Sarah, which indicates the beginning of the fulfillment of promises to both of them. Now, I said that I state this with hesitancy, because it is not your job or your pastor's job to think of a new name for you.

Their new names have a significance; and what was significant in your new birth was, God regenerated you; God formed or made alive the human spirit within you, which allows you to store information about Him and allows you communion with Him. That human spirit is the target for Bible doctrine; that human spirit is the target for divine truth. Through the accumulation of doctrine in your human spirit, you begin to know and understand God, as well as His plan for you.

What believers too often do is, at salvation, they find some incident or set of incidents in the Bible, and then they copy these incidents. Just like this renaming of Abram and Sarai. They read that and decide, "My name should not longer be *Charley Brown;* it should be Charlemagne!" Now, has God come to you and renamed you? Are you either 99 or 100 years old and you and your spouse have no children and God will bless you with children now? Has God given promises to you that a new race of people will come from you? So you are not really copying what has happened here. You are just lifting some superficiality out of context and doing that. Now, quite obviously, there are not many churches that do this. I am aware of one cult which, as far as I know, is pretty much dead now. I mention this because this is an unemotional topic for you. You can look at this and recognize that, giving yourself a new name or having some spiritual leader rename you is obviously not something that you need to do in order to make your Christian walk a little bit better. You recognize that simply copying this incident is sort of silly.

The Bible is filled with mandates. The Bible is filled with things that God tells us to do or not to do as believers (there is even guidance for unbelievers). Copying a portion of some set of circumstances in the Bible as best as you can is not the spiritual life. In some cases, it is lunacy.

In the beginning of this chapter, we studied the **spiritual life for Abraham**. Back in the introduction to the weekly lessons in Genesis, in **introductory lessons II and III**, the most fundamental aspects of the Christian life were discussed. We are mandated to be filled with the Spirit; we are mandated to learn Bible doctrine. Do what is mandated; do not worry about those things which God has not mandated.

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 17:1–15 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, “Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations.” I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep [or, *guard*] My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. 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, 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. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant." And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.”

God has come to Abram after 13 years of silence and reaffirmed his covenant with him. God illustrated Abram being born again in two ways: by renaming him and by requiring Abraham to be circumcised. When Abram was renamed to Abraham, God’s promises to him were reaffirmed simply by his new name.

Everywhere that Abraham wandered in Canaan, and more, would belong to his descendants forever.

The part of the covenant that was new and very specific was circumcision. Abraham would be circumcised, every male in his household would be circumcised and, from that point on, all male children at 8 days old would be circumcised. As we studied, circumcision will mean the revitalization of Abraham’s sex life which indicates regeneration. All rituals found in the Bible mean something. They are not just a recognition of God’s authority.

———————————

Then *Sarai* (*my prince*) was renamed *Sarah* (*princess*). And then God says:

And I have blessed her and also, I have given from her to you a son. And I have blessed her and she has been for nations; kings of peoples from her will be.”	Genesis 17:16	**And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed her [*him;* according to the Greek, Syriac and targum], then she [*he;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum] has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from her [*him;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum].”**

And I have blessed her; furthermore, I will give you a son from her. And when I have blessed him, then he will become nations—kings of peoples will come from him."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And I will bless in her body, and will also give from her a son to you, and I will bless, him, and he shall be for assemblies, and kings ruling over nations shall be from her.
Latin Vulgate	And I will bless her, and of her I will give you a son, whom I will bless, and he shall become nations, and kings of people shall spring from him.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And I have blessed her and also, I have given from her to you a son. And I have blessed her and she has been for nations; kings of peoples from her will be."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And I will bless her, and also I will give you a son by her; yea, I will bless him and make nations of him; and the kings of the people shall come from him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I will bless her, and give you a son from her, and I will bless him, and he shall become nations, and kings of nations shall be of him.

Significant differences:

Although the perfect tense indicates a completed action, in most cases, the eventual English translation is generally translated as a future tense. The targum seems to add words and interpret the verse, so we have *in body* added to the first phrase. *By her* in the Syriac is not exactly correct; it ought to be *from her*. However, this is the English translation from the Syriac. The Complete Apostles Bible (translated from the LXX) made the same mistake, even though the Greek was accurate.

The big problems are in the final 3 phrases. The Hebrew has the feminine singular suffix throughout and the Greek uses a masculine singular pronoun instead. The targum, Latin and Syriac also indicate this ought to be a masculine throughout (the English translation of the Latin first uses a relative pronoun, which refers back to the son). This is a very big problem, and I cannot recall any translation of the Bible which makes a note of this except for the Concordant Literal Version, which is under the more literal translations.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	I will bless her, and you will have a son by her. She will become the mother of nations, and some of her descendants will even be kings.
Easy English (Pocock)	I shall *bless Sarah. And I shall give a son to you from her. I shall *bless her, and her family will become nations. Kings of nations will be among her *descendants.'
Easy-to-Read Version	I will bless her. I will give her a son, and you will be the father. She will be the mother of many new nations. Kings of nations will come from her."
Good News Bible (TEV)	I will bless her, and I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will become the mother of nations, and there will be kings among her descendants."
The Message	I'll bless her--yes! I'll give you a son by her! Oh, how I'll bless her! Nations will come from her; kings of nations will come from her."
New Berkeley Version	I will bless her, yes, and give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall become a mother of nations and from her kings of peoples shall spring.
New Life Bible	And I will bring good to her. I will give you a son by her. I will bring good to her. And she will be the mother of nations. Kings of many people will come from her."
New Living Translation	And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	I blessed her to also give you a son from her. I blessed her: She will have nations and kings of people from her."
New American Bible	I will bless her, and I will give you a son by her. Her also will I bless; she will give rise to nations, and rulers of peoples will issue from her. Gn 18:10; Gal 4:23.
New Jerusalem Bible	I shall bless her and moreover give you a son by her. I shall bless her and she will become nations: kings of peoples will issue from her.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And I will give her a blessing so that you will have a son by her: truly my blessing will be on her, and she will be the mother of nations: kings of peoples will be her offspring.
Conservapedia	I will bless her, and also give you a son from her. I repeat: I will bless her, and she will be a mother of ethnic groups. Kings of peoples will descend from her."
The Expanded Bible	I will bless her and give ·her a son, and you will be the father [└from her to you a son]. She will ·be the mother of [give rise to] many nations. Kings of nations will come from her."
NET Bible®	I will bless her and will give you a son through her. I will bless her and she will become a mother of nations [tn Heb "she will become nations."]. Kings of countries [tn Heb "peoples."] will come from her!"
New Heart English Bible	I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations. Kings of peoples will come from her."
NIV, ©2010	I 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."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	...and I bless her and also give you a son of her: yes, I bless her, that she becomes a goyim; sovereigns of people become of her.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her.”
Kaplan Translation	I will bless her, and make her bear you a son. I will bless her so that she will be [the mother] of entire nations - kings will be her descendants.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And I will bless her, and give thee ben also of her; yes, will bless her, and she shall give rise to Goyim; melechim of peoples shall be from her.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And I bless her, and, moreover, I give you a son of her. And bless him will I and he comes to be for nations, and kings of peoples shall come from him.
English Standard V. – UK	I will bless her, and moreover, I will give[e] you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."
Heritage Bible	And I have knelt down with goodness to her, and have given you a son also of her; yes, I have knelt down with goodness to her, and she shall become peoples; kings of people shall be of her..
New RSV	I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'
Syndein	"And I will bless her, and give you a son also by the source of her {Sarah}. Yes, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations. Kings of people shall be from the source of her." {Note: A similar promise was made to Hagar in Genesis 16:10.

	But her descendants were going to be 'wild asses of men' - always contending with each other.}.
World English Bible	I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations. Kings of peoples will come from her."
Young's Updated LT	And I have blessed her, and have also given to you a son from her; and I have blessed her, and she has become nations—kings of peoples are from her."

The gist of this verse: God tells Abraham that He will bless Sarah and he will have a son from her. God will bless that son and he will become nations; and kings will come from him (the Hebrew has 3rd person feminine singular suffixes and verbs throughout the final 3 phrases).

Genesis 17:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bârak^{e} (בָּרַךְ:) [pronounced *baw-RAHK^{e}*]	*to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless* [as God, man and other created things], *therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone* [with a blessing]; *to curse*	1st person singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally *to, toward*	affixed to a 3rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Translation: And I have blessed her;... God is referring back to Sarah, whom He will bless. Again, the perfect tense indicates that this has already taken place for God, because He is outside of time. For us, we wold perceive this as a perfect tense.

Genesis 17:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*]	*also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover*	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean *together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore*.			
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*]	*to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make*	1st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678

Genesis 17:16b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
min (ומן) [pronounced *min*]	*from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than*	preposition of separation with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
bên (בן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...furthermore, I have given you a son from her. Then God says something which really catches Abraham's attention—he will be given a son from her. God has on several previous occasions, promised Abraham that many nations will come from him and that his descendants would own the land through which he walked. Furthermore, God upped the ante previously by making a covenant with Abraham. However, this, and what follows, is going to be a bit much for Abraham, as we will see.

Abraham is sexually dead and his wife is infertile and God promises them a child; in fact, many nations would comes from her and many kings would come from her.

Genesis 17:16c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or ו) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bârak^{e} (בָּרֵךְ:) [pronounced *baw-RAHK*^{e}]	*to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless* [as God, man and other created things], *therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone* [with a blessing]; *to curse*	1st person singular, Piel perfect with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
The Greek, Syriac and targum all indicate that this is a 3rd person masculine singular suffix instead. The Latin appears to have a relative pronoun instead (this is based upon the English translation from the Latin).			

Translation: When I have blessed her [*him;* according to the Greek, Syriac and targum],... When I began to translate the Hebrew, I thought that this was odd, for God to say a second time that He has blessed her. One explanation is, the two wâw consecutive can be set up as a *when...then...* combination.

When I realized that all the ancient translations disagreed with the Hebrew at this point, using the verb *to bless* a second time made far more sense. God says here, "And I have blessed him." *Him* refers to the son that Abraham will have from Sarah.

This is the first time that it is recorded in Scripture that God would bless Abraham through Sarah. Prior to this it was implied in Scripture that she would be the mother of the promise, but it was never stated. This does not mean that God did not tell this specifically to Abraham before; however, I prefer to think that God gave Abraham enough information to realize that the son of the promise would come through Sarah, yet allowed Abraham to deduce it (which he did not).

I find it curious that God tells Abraham for the first time that Sarah will bear the child of promise to him. Now, as previously discussed, Abraham could have determined this logically. He knew that God created Adam and the woman, and that was the pattern which God set up. But here, God makes it clear—"It is you and Sarah who will have this child."

Let's look at this for a moment.

God Waited to Specifically Include Sarah in the Son of Promise

1. As previously discussed, had Abraham given it any thought, he would have realized that only he and Sarah can have the child of promise. There is nothing in the Bible which suggests that God mandates oddball families or surrogate mothers. These things occurred, and were, in some cases, codified later by the Law of Moses; but in the time of Abraham, there was nothing in the past to suggest that God favored anything other than the traditional, nuclear family.
2. However, this is the first time that Sarah is included in this promise.
3. This suggests that Sarah has reached a stage of spiritual growth to be a part of this promise.
4. God also has designed an impossible situation. Sarah is 90. As far as I know, the oldest woman to give birth is **70** or **74** (Sarah would have been of a better genetic quality; but still, not only was she barren in life, but she had gone past the age of having children).
5. Abraham himself was no longer virile.
6. God allowed Abraham and Sarah to try out a human solution (the surrogacy of Hagar, Sarah's personal maidservant).
7. The human solution produced a child, but not the child of promise.
8. The divine solution will produce the child of promise, because God is not constrained by the laws of physics and biology which He set up.
9. Because God willed this to come about, this is a supernatural process; just as regeneration is a supernatural process.
10. Sarah is the key to this supernatural process (something which Abraham should have recognized on his own); just as Mary is the key to the supernatural process of bearing the Lord Jesus Christ.
11. It is now the proper time for God to begin to bring what He has promised to pass.

Here is a point of interest. When God brings all of this to pass and makes Abraham capable of siring a child and Sarah capable of bearing a child; for Sarah, this will be a one-time deal. Abraham will continue to be potent even after Sarah dies.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Genesis 17:16d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וַ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Two wâw conjunctions may continue the thought of a compound conditional sentence. ***When*** *this happens,* ***then*** *this will occur* is the idea here.

Genesis 17:16d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
The Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum all present this as a 3rd person masculine singular.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ **Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7)**. ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.			
gôwyîm (מִיּוּג) [pronounced *goh-YIHM*]	*Gentiles, [Gentile] nations, people, peoples, nations*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

Translation: ...then she [*he;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum] has become nations—... So, this gives us a tough call. Did these other ancient languages change this to a masculine simply because they did not like women and did not like all of this stuff proceeding from Sarah? I cannot give a good, definitive answer here. There is more involved here than a mixup of a letter or the omission of a letter.

The verb *to be* followed by the lâmed preposition indicates that one thing becomes something else. Sarah here (or, her son, Isaac) will become nations.

In either case, whether we are speaking of Sarah or of Isaac, their son to come, from both of them come nations; these nations come genetically from Sarah and through Isaac. So, even though the translation is quite a big deal; the final interpretation is not problematic. Whether God is saying that Sarah will become nations or Isaac will become nations, both statements are true.

Genesis 17:16e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
melek^{e} (רֶלֶמ:) [pronounced *MEH-lek*]	*king, ruler, prince*	masculine plural construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

Genesis 17:16e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿammîym (מִימַּע) [pronounced *ġahm-MEEM*]	*peoples, nations; tribes [of Israel]; relatives of anyone*	masculine plural collective noun	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
min (וְמ) [pronounced *min*]	*from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than*	preposition of separation with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*]	*to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass*	3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

The targum, Latin, Greek and Syriac all read: Kings of peoples will be from him.

Translation: ...kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from her [*him;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum]." The third phrase has the same problems as the previous two. The Hebrew says that kings of people will come from Sarah; the other ancient translations have that these kings come from Isaac. Both things are true.

However, before we go any further you need to know that, just as in v. 14, there is a hidden problem of translation of v. 16. Nearly every translation there is sounds very similar to what I have written above, but that is not necessarily accurate. However, the problem before was found in the Hebrew text, hidden in the Hebrew text. However, this problem will be apparent with the other ancient translations of the Old Testament.

And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed her [*him;* according to the Greek, Syriac and targum], then she [*he;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum] has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from her [*him;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum]." This time, the problem is different.

Therefore, according to the targums, the Latin, the Greek and the Syriac, this verse should read:

Gen. 17:16 And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him [i.e., *the son*], then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him."

I mentioned the targums and a number of ancient translation. Here is a brief background of each.

Ancient Translations of the Bible

Translation	Background
The Targums	The Jews were removed from the Land of Promise in 586 B.C. under the fifth stage of national discipline and taken to Babylon. When the Jews returned to the land 70 years later, they spoke Chaldean (western Aramaic) rather than Hebrew. So that the Scriptures could be understood when read in the synagogue, there was a loose translation given of them in Aramaic. This was eventually written down as the Onkelos Targum and as the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel. These targums date back to the century before the birth of Christ, although the earliest copies of them which we have only date back to A.D. 500. Furthermore, these are paraphrases rather than translations, so there is some interpretation thrown in, and a lot of extra explanatory text. The two named are the most well-known of the ancient targums. It is only recently[17] that portions of this translation is becoming available on the internet.
The Greek Septuagint	This is generally a careful translation from the Hebrew into the Greek done around 200–100 B.C., supposedly done by 70 scholars (for this reason, it is also called the LXX, which means *the Seventy*). This translation would have been based upon Hebrew manuscripts dating as far back as 400 B.C. and even before. This is particularly helpful in 3 ways: (1) some difficult Hebrew words are translated into the Greek, so that we have a better idea as to what these words mean; (2) some portions of the LXX contain portions of verses which appear to have been dropped out of later Hebrew text; and (3) this mostly confirms to us the great accuracy of the Hebrew text, from which many modern translations are made. Let me add one more important function of the LXX: the Greek translation reveals that the Bible has stood essentially unchanged for centuries. No theological group ever got a hold of the Bible and made it conform to their doctrines. There is a clear bias in some modern translations; but the text upon which they are based has stood firm going back to around 400 B.C. at least (which is when the Old Testament had been completed). The Septuagint became the "Christian Bible" in the ancient world. Many early Christians spoke Greek, so it is only natural that they would gravitate towards this version of the Old Testament. However, despite this, the preserved Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old Testament do not significantly differ in content. The Greek is not a "Christianized" version of the Hebrew. One cannot find specifically Christian doctrines in the Greek which are missing in the Hebrew Old Testament. The oldest Greek translations that we have today are the Chester Beatty Papyri, which contains 9 Old Testament Books in the Greek Septuagint and which dates back to between A.D. 100-400; and the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus each contain almost the entire Old Testament of the Greek Septuagint and they both dated around A.D. 350.

It should be noted that the Septuagint was not the only Greek translation of the Old Testament. In fact, Origen, in A.D. 240–250, developed *Origen's Hexapla,* which was a 6 parallel column text of the Old Testament. In the first column was the original Hebrew text; in the second was the Hebrew text transliterated into Greek letters; in the third was the literal translation of Aquila (a Greek translation of the Old Testament, circa A.D. 130); in the fourth was the idiomatic revision of Symmachus (a Greek paraphrase of the Old Testament, where the overall meaning was key); in the fifth was Origin's own revision of the LXX; and in the sixth was the Greek revision by Theodotion. So, the idea of a parallel Bible goes back to around A.D. 250. Unfortunately, we have no copies of Origen's Hexapla today. This would have been a huge manuscript and not easy to produce or sell.

[17] I write this in 2012 and 2013.

Ancient Translations of the Bible

Translation	Background
The Latin Vulgate	Even as Rome conquered much of the known world, they held onto the Greek culture and the Greek language. However, after awhile, more and more people in the Roman empire began to speak Latin. Therefore, a translation was needed into the Latin, and that was done by St. Jerome. There already were a variety of texts and translations at that time, such as the Old Latin version of the Old Testament. Between A.D. 390–405, Jerome did a new Latin translation of the Old Testament, which appears to have been based on Hebrew manuscripts, but he apparently used the Greek LXX and other ancient translations as well. The history is more complex than this, but this is a reasonable summary. The Latin Vulgate is often used as the basic text for many Catholic versions of the Bible although it is more common for modern English translations approved by the Catholic church use the extent Hebrew manuscripts as well. Jerome apparently translated portions of the apocrypha (the books written in between the Old and New Testaments), but it is not clear that he translated all of them and it appears as if he treated them as separate works from the Old Testament (that is, he did not consider them inspired. Jerome's Latin translation is excellent and very dependable. I have yet to come across any passage in Jerome's Latin translation which is decidedly Catholic. I am not saying there is no bias in the Latin Vulgate; I am simply stating that I have never come across any (most of my work is in the Old Testament).
The Peshitta (the Syriac text)	Syriac is a dialect or collection of dialects from the eastern Aramaic language. We do not know for certain who made this translation into Syriac and there are even some who claim it is the original language for the New Testament. It appears possible that the Syriac version of the Old Testament was done in the first or second centuries A.D. Geisler and Nix place this time period as late as the 3rd century (or even later) and that it is the work of many unnamed people. It appears as though our earliest manuscript of the Old Testament in Syriac dates back to the 9th century A.D.

Of these ancient translations, the Greek and the Latin are the closest to the Masoretic text (the Hebrew). The Peshitta varies slightly more than the Greek and the Latin, but I have come across many instances where the Syriac and Latin agree and are at variance with the Greek. The targums are not very reliable with entirely new sentences and phrases thrown in.

However, when it comes to the Greek, Syriac and Latin, the ways in which they differ from the Hebrew text are quite trivial and often represent the constraints of the language. For instance, in the Hebrew, the word *face* is always in the plural. However, it sounds goofy to us in the English to translate this literally to *his faces;* so it is translated *his face*. Because this is just the way it is, no English translation has a footnote telling you, *literally, from the Hebrew, this reads "his faces."* Therefore, many of the differences which we find are simply grammatical nuances in one language which are not found in the other language.

What I personally do not find is, some sort of theological bias slipping in. I don't see a difference in Latin and Hebrew, and then think to myself, "There is that old Catholic bias slipping in again." Several modern English translations show much more of an intentional bias than can be found in the differences between the Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Syriac manuscripts.

If for some reason, I was only confined to the Greek or the Latin manuscripts, the material I have written would not be any different.

We have nearly complete Hebrew manuscripts, but they are dated later than you might think: the Aleppo Codex: contains the complete Old Testament and is dated around A.D. 950. However, more than a quarter of this Codex was destroyed in anti-Jewish riots in 1947.[18] There is also the Codex Leningradensis, which is the complete Old Testament in Hebrew copied by the last member of the Ben Asher family in A.D. 1008. There are slightly earlier fragments of manuscripts which are still in existence, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are dated back to 200 B.C. to A.D. 70 and contain the entire book of Isaiah and portions of every other Old Testament book except Esther. It is the Dead Sea Scrolls which have confirmed to us the accuracy of the Hebrew texts which we depend upon today.

These ancient translations can be found online:

The Targum	**http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/**
The Hebrew	**http://qbible.com/hebrew-old-testament/**
The Greek	**http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/biblical/lxxmorph/**
The Latin	**http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=0&b=1**
The Syriac	**http://www.studylight.org/desk/?l=en&query=Genesis+1&section=0&translation=pes&oq=Genesis&new=1**

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http://mb-soft.com/believe/txx/targum.htm accessed February 20, 2012.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate accessed February 20, 2012.
http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/bibleorigin.html accessed February 20, 2012 and appears to be a good resource for this type of information.
http://www.bible-researcher.com/vulgate1.html accessed February 20, 2012.
Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible;* Chicago; Moody Press, ©1980, p. 507–508, 512–513, 539.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

In my estimation, the translation of v. 16, based upon the Greek, Latin and Syriac, should be:

Gen. 17:16 And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him."

This slightly changed translation clears up a problem, which threw me a curve at first: in the Hebrew, this verse speaks of God having blessed Sarah; and then it says, a few words later, *when I have blessed her*. In the repaired translation, God has blessed Sarah and God has blessed her son.

First, God refers back to Sarah, whom He will bless. The perfect tense indicates that this has already taken place for God, because He is outside of time.

Then God says something which really catches Abraham's attention—he will be given a son from her—from Sarah. God has on several previous occasions, promised Abraham that many nations will come from him and that his descendants would own the land through which he walked. However, this time, he is clearly told that this covenant will be fulfilled through a son by Sarah.

The 3rd phrase I have translated, *when I have blessed him*. The conjunction is the simple wâw conjunction (*and*), which can also be translated *when*. The idea is, this will look to a future time, not necessarily even during the lifetime of Isaac, the son who will be born to Abraham and Sarah.

[18] Even though I find nearly this exact phrasing in a dozen places on the internet, none of these sites indicate where these riots took place. There were apparently anti-Jewish riots in Britain in 1947, but it appears as though the Aleppo Codex was originally smuggled from Syria to Israel. Geisler and Nix, whom I trust more than information on the internet, write that it was *reported* to have been destroyed, but added that it would be the basis for the *New Hebrew Bible* **produced** by the Hebrew University. Based on the description in Amazon, there does not appear to be a problem with the Aleppo Codex.

The verb for *has become* is the simple hâyâh, which means *to be;* however, when it is followed by a lâmed preposition, as here, then it indicates a transformation or a change which takes place. So *he has become nations; kings of peoples will come from him*.

However, God apparently lost Abraham back where He said, "I have give you a son from her." Sarah? 90 year-old Sarah? She is going to give birth to a son? Abraham is thinking all about that particular promise. His thinking did not keep up with all that God said.

This is the first time that is recorded that God clearly told Abraham that he would sire a son through Sarah. Abraham's response is interesting.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Abraham Laughs, Questions God, and Proposes Ishmael to Fulfill the Covenant

In any case, Abraham has an unusual reaction to what God promises here.

And so falls Abraham upon his faces and so he is laughing. And so he says in his heart, "To a son of a hundred year is born and behold Sarah, a daughter of ninety year to give birth?"	Genesis 17:17	**Then Abraham fell on his face and he laughed. Then he said to his heart, "Will [a child] be born to [one who is] 100 years old? And behold Sarah—will a 90-year-old woman give birth?"**

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed. Then he said to himself, "Will a child be born to someone who is 100-years-old? And consider Sarah—will this 90-year-old woman give birth?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham fell on his face, and wondered, and said in his heart, Shall the son of a hundred years have progeny, and Sarah, the daughter of ninety years, bear a child? [JERUSALEM. And Abraham bowed upon his face, and wondered.]
Latin Vulgate	Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, saying in his heart: Will a son, think you, be born to him that is a hundred years old? And will Sara that is ninety years old bring forth?
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so falls Abraham upon his faces and so he is laughing. And so he says in his heart, "To a son of a hundred year is born and behold Sarah, a daughter of ninety year to give birth?"
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said in his heart, Shall a son be born to him who is a hundred years old? Or shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham fell upon his face and laughed; and said in his heart, Shall there be a child to one who is a hundred years old, and shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?
Significant differences:	The targum has Abraham *wondering* instead of laughing. The Latin appears to have the word *a son,* which is found in the text, but not in the way that it is used here. The use of the hypothetical article is ignored in all of the languages (see the exegesis below). At the end of this verse, there is no word for *child* in the Hebrew.

There does not appear to be a word for *child* in the actual Greek. The English translation from the Syriac appears to have the word for *child*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Abraham bowed with his face to the ground and thought, "I am almost a hundred years old. How can I become a father? And Sarah is ninety. How can she have a child?" So he started laughing.
Easy English (Pocock)	Then Abraham *bowed down with his face close to the ground. And he laughed. He was thinking this. `Surely a man that is 100 years old cannot become a father. And surely Sarah cannot become a mother. She is 99.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham bowed his face to the ground {to show he respected God}. But he laughed and said to himself, “I am 100 years old. I can’t have a son. And Sarah is 90 years old. She can’t have a child.”
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham bowed down with his face touching the ground, but he began to laugh when he thought, "Can a man have a child when he is a hundred years old? Can Sarah have a child at ninety?"
The Message	Abraham fell flat on his face. And then he laughed, thinking, "Can a hundred-year-old man father a son? And can Sarah, at ninety years, have a baby?"
New Berkeley Version	Abraham fell on his face and laughed, saying to himself, “Shall a child be born to a centenarian, or can Sarah bear at ninety?”
New Century Version	Abraham bowed facedown on the ground and laughed. He said to himself, "Can a man have a child when he is a hundred years old? Can Sarah give birth to a child when she is ninety?"
New Life Bible	Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed. He said to himself, "Will a child be born to a man who is 100 years old?
New Living Translation	Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well with that, AbraHam fell to his face and laughed, asking in his heart, 'Will a hundred-year-old [man] father a child? And will SarAh (who is ninety years old) give birth to it?'
Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham fell toward his face and laughed, saying in his heart, "Does a son of a hundred beget? and Sarah begets, a daughter of ninety years?"
God’s Word™	Immediately, Abraham bowed with his face touching the ground. He laughed as he thought to himself, "Can a son be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, have a child?"
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham bowed to the ground, and he laughed, thinking to himself, 'Is a child to be born to a man one hundred years old, and will Sarah have a child at the age of ninety?
Revised English Bible	Abraham bowed low, and laughing said to himself, ‘Can a son be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah bear a child at ninety?”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Then Abraham went down on his face, and laughing, said in his heart, May a man a hundred years old have a child? will Sarah, at ninety years old, give birth?
Conservapedia	At that Abraham fell on his face and laughed. He said to himself, "How can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? And how could Sarah, at the age of ninety, possibly have a child?"

The Expanded Bible	Abraham ·bowed facedown on the ground [└fell on his face] and laughed. He ·said to himself [thought; └said in his heart], "Can a man have a child when he is a hundred years old? Can Sarah give birth to a child when she is ninety?"
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed and said in his heart, “When I am an hundred years old? And will Sarah also, when ninety years of age, have children?”
New Advent Bible	Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, saying in his heart: Shall a son, do you think, be born to him that is a hundred years old? And shall Sara that is ninety years old bring forth?
NET Bible®	Then Abraham bowed down with his face to the ground and laughed [Laughed. The Hebrew verb used here provides the basis for the naming of Isaac: “And he laughed” is וַיִּצְחָק (vayyitskhaq); the name “Isaac” is יִצְחָק (yitskhaq), “he laughs.” Abraham’s (and Sarah’s, see 18:12) laughter signals disbelief, but when the boy is born, the laughter signals surprise and joy.] as he said to himself [Heb "And he fell on his face and laughed and said in his heart."], "Can [The imperfect verbal form here carries a potential nuance, as it expresses the disbelief of Abraham.] a son be born to a man who is a hundred years old [Heb "to the son of a hundred years."]? Can Sarah [It is important to note that even though Abraham staggers at the announcement of the birth of a son, finding it almost too incredible, he nonetheless calls his wife Sarah, the new name given to remind him of the promise of God (v. 15).] bear a child at the age of ninety [Heb "the daughter of ninety years."]?"
New Heart English Bible	Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to him who is one hundred years old? Will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth?"
NIV, ©2010	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?"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	At this Avraham fell on his face and laughed - he thought to himself, "Will a child be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah give birth at ninety?"
exeGeses companion Bible	Then Abraham falls on his face and laughs and says in his heart, Birth - a son of a hundred years? And Sarah, a daughter of ninety years, birth?
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, “Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?”
Kaplan Translation	Abraham fell on his face and he laughed [Yitzchak in Hebrew, equivalent to Isaac (see note on Genesis 17:19). Some interpret the word tzachak here literally as 'laughed' (Abarbanel; Septuagint), while others interpret it as 'rejoiced' (Targum; Saadia; Rashi).]. He said to himself, 'Can a hundred-year-old man have children? Can Sarah, who is ninety, give birth?'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Then Avraham fell upon his face, and yitzchak (laughed), and said in his lev, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred shanah? And shall Sarah, that is ninety shanah, bear?

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	Then falling is Abraham on his face. And laughing is he and saying in his heart, "To one a hundred years of age shall a son be born? And should Sarah, ninety years of age, be bearing?
English Revised Version	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?"

Heritage Bible	And Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall I, a son of one hundred years, beget? And shall Sarah, a daughter of ninety years bear?
LTHB	And Abraham fell on his face and laughed. And he said in his heart, Shall one be born to a son of a hundred years? And shall Sarah bear, a daughter of ninety years?
Syndein	Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed {tsachaq} and said {'amar} in his heart/'right lobe', "Shall a child be born unto him who is an hundred years old {implying sexual death}? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear {also past menopause and sexually dead}? {Note: Tsachaq - is transliterated 'Isaac'. The name Isaac means 'laughter'. Here Abraham laughed/Isaac'ed so hard at the impossible thought that he could not stand up. In the next chapter, Sarah will also 'Isaac' . . . and then 9 months later give birth to 'Isaac'.}.
Webster's Bible Translation	Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall [a child] be born to him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear?
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham falls upon his face, and laughs, and says in his heart, "To the son of an hundred years is one born? or does Sarah—daughter of ninety years—bear?"

The gist of this verse: Abraham falls on his face and laughs, based upon the idea that he and Sarah might have children.

Genesis 17:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*]	*to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced *ģahl*]	*upon, against, above*	preposition	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
pânîym (מִפְנֵי) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*]	*face, faces, countenance; presence*	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular) with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, ʿâl and pânîym mean *upon his face of, facing him, in front of him, before (as in preference to) him, in addition to him, overlooking him*.

Translation: Then Abraham fell on his face... The wording here is exactly the same as in v. 3, with the exception of Abraham's name, which was *Abram* back in v. 3. After 13 years, God appears and begins to talk to Abraham, and he falls on his face. However, at this point, Abraham is falling back down on his face (which implies that he sat up or stood up) possibly for a different reason.

Up until this time, when in the presence of God, Abraham prostrated himself out of obedience and respect; however, he is expressing a certain amount of doubt at this stage in the game. He believed God and this was credited to him as righteousness, but he seems somewhat skeptical at this point. The literal rendering of a portion of this verse is "...to a son of 100 years shall a child be born and Sarah, a daughter of 90 years, shall bear a child?" Abraham thinks that he is being funny by calling himself a son of 100 years and Sarah a daughter of 90 years; they are both young enough to be called son and daughter.

There is another interpretation to Abraham's action. Bullinger believes that Abraham fell on the ground laughing for joy. I believe that Abraham should have known that the promises to him would be fulfilled through Sarah, but that he did not put two and two together. I believe that Abraham all this time has come to assume that the promises to him would be fulfilled in Ishmael. There is nothing to indicate that Abraham is having any more children. And there might be a mix of incredulousness and skepticism in Abraham's questions. What he has heard from God is quite powerful and amazing.

Genesis 17:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâchaq (צָחַק) [pronounced *tsaw-KHAHKH*]	*to laugh; to mock; to play*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6711 BDB #850

Translation: ...and he laughed. At this point, we have possibly a problem. Is Abraham on the ground laughing at God? Did this strike him as funny? Does this strike him as ridiculous? Does Abraham find this funny in a way that he doubts God or does he find this funny, even though he trusts God?

The New Testament tells us that He who was beyond confidence believed on hope for him to become the father of many nations (according to that which was spoken, "So your seed shall be"). And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body already dead (being about a hundred years old) or the deadening of Sarah's womb. He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform (Rom. 4:18–21). So, what is Paul doing here? Is he putting a happy face on everything? Was Abraham laughing derisively? Did this strike Abraham as so crazy that it could not be true, and so he just laughed?

No, and for three reasons: (1) Paul tells us that Abraham did not stagger at the promise of God; and (2) Abraham allowed himself to be circumcised along with all the males under his authority. Without getting particularly graphic, let me put it this way: no man is going to allow himself to be circumcised on the basis of a promise that he considers ridiculous and funny in a derisive way. If you are an uncircumcised adult male and someone comes up to you and says, "Hey, I am going to give you a billion dollars if I can circumcise you without anesthetic." There are not many males who are going to be circumcised *just in case this is a valid offer*. You will allow yourself to be circumcised because you believe something to be absolutely true; because you have no doubt about what is being promised. A billion dollars might not be your price; it may be a little higher than that, but you will not make such a deal unless you are 100% certain that it is going to happen. (3) Abraham will make a request of God, and God will hear this request. Such a thing would not be done if Abraham were out of fellowship (vv. 19–20).

Therefore, Abraham may be laughing and this may seem ridiculous to him at first; but he will believe God—he will not stagger at the promise of God—and he will prove this by allowing himself to be circumcised (I am going to assume that Abraham did not do this to himself).

Genesis 17:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (רַמָא) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*]	*to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
b^{e} (בְ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning*	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
lêb (בֵל) [pronounced *lay^{b}v*]	*heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking; midst*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524

Translation: Then he said to his heart,... Again, we do not know exactly what is going on in Abraham's mind, apart from what he says here. God knows. This is recorded for us because Abraham was the one who recorded it. He knows what he was thinking and God the Holy Spirit knows what he is thinking.

Genesis 17:17d

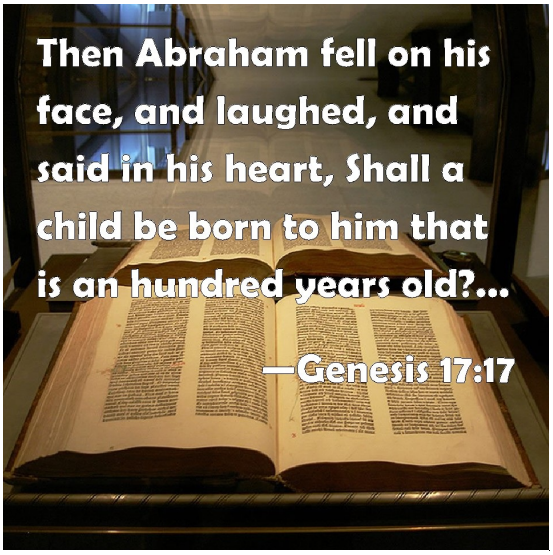
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (הֲ) [pronounced *heh*]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb *to be* may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ **Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7).** ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.

Genesis 17:17d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
mêʾâh (מֵאָה) [pronounced *may-AW*]	*one hundred, a hundred, hundred*	feminine singular numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*]	*year*	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced *yaw-LAHD*]	*to be born*	3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

Translation:..."Will [a child] be born to [one who is] 100 years old? A literal translation is somewhat difficult, so I have added a few words to smooth the translation out. The concept is quite easy—is a 100 year-old man going to sire a child? So, this had not occurred in anyone's memory. Abraham knows that he is sexually dead. He knows his age. He knows that this is quite unusual and, possibly, unlikely—at least based upon human viewpoint thinking.



So far, this verse reads: Then Abraham fell on his face and he laughed. Then he said to his heart, "Will [a child] be born to [one who is] 100 years old?" So Abraham is not saying this out loud; therefore, he is not mocking God. These are words that did not accidentally just slip out of his mouth, after which he said, "Oops, did I just say that out loud?" Abraham thought this, and this, taken together with his laughing, suggests that Abraham was amused by the reality of this promise made to him by God.

Genesis 17:17 (graphic) from **Biblepic.com**; accessed December 6, 2013.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Genesis 17:17e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
we (or ve) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced *eem*]	*if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when* (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

Genesis 17:17e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The particle ʾîm (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative (*lo, behold*), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (*if, though*); an indication of a wish or desire (*oh that, if only;* this is a rare usage).			
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced *saw-RAW*]	*princess, noble woman;* transliterated *Sarah*	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
hă (הָ) [pronounced *heh*]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb *to be* may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
bath (בַּת) [pronounced *baht*]	*daughter; village*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
tish^{e}ʿîym (תִּשְׁעִים) [pronounced *tish-ĢEEM*]	*ninety*	indeclinable noun; adjective; archaic plural	Strong's #8673 BDB #1077
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*]	*year*	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced *yaw-LAHD*]	*to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget*	3rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

Translation: And behold Sarah—will a 90-year-old woman give birth?" The same thing is true for his wife, Sarah. She is 90 years old. She is not going to be giving birth anytime in the near future—not based upon human viewpoint thinking. I think the records are (and I may not be up-to-date on this stat) that the oldest woman to give birth is **70** or **74** years old.

These two sentences are set in the form of questions, as the Hebrew dictates; however, what we have here is erotesis [pronounced *er-ō-TEE-sis*] is a figure of speech wherein someone asks an animated question but it is not with the intention of obtaining information. Such a question could indicate wonder and admiration or it could indicate that Abraham is doubtful.

Gen 17:17 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?"

So, you see that Abraham is not thinking about all that God said here; he is focused on the Sarah bearing him a child part. He can't get over that idea.

Throughout this chapter—and I have not pointed it out in every instance—we have a repetition of phrases. Here, when Abraham falls on his face, the exact words are taken from v. 3. So, God appears to Abraham after 13 years of silence, and Abraham then falls on his face in great reverence. At some point in time in this chapter—the narrative does not tell us when—Abraham then either stands up or sits up. But now, when he hears that Sarah is going to have a child by him, he falls on his face again. This time, it does not appear to be out of fear or respect. It is possible that he is simply hiding the big goofy smile on his face.

When we have repetitive phrases, often that means that the chapter is organized in a specific manner (**chiasmos** seems to be the most common organization for a chapter of the Bible). This chapter is so organized, which we will **study** in the **addendum**.

Abraham finds this promise made to him to be rather humorous. He knows his own sexual condition; he knows that he is personally incapable of impregnating Sarah. He is incapable of having sex. Although he is not a doctor, Abraham seems to have doubts that his wife is able herself to bear any children.

However, later in Romans, we will read, with regards to this promise, He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform (Rom. 4:20–21). And we have already shown that, by allowing himself to be circumcised, Abraham was strong in faith.

So far, we have studied the first 17 verses in Gen. 17, the corrected translation of which is below:

Gen 17:1–17 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, “Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations.” I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. 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, 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. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant." And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.” And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him.” 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?"

Abraham finds the idea of he and Sarah have a child together rather humorous. Then he tells God that he has a solution to this whole problem:

And so says Abraham unto the Elohim, “Oh that Ishmael live to Your faces.”	Genesis 17:18	**Then Abraham said unto the Elohim, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You.”**

Then Abraham said to God, “Oh that my son Ishmael might live before You.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham said before the Lord, May not Ishmael be established, and serve before You?
Latin Vulgate	And he said to God: O that Ismael may live before You.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Abraham unto the Elohim, “Oh that Ishmael live to Your faces.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham said to God, O that Ishmael might live in your presence!
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham said to God, Let this Ismael live before You.

Significant differences: The targum appears to interpret the final verb and expand on its meaning.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	To God Abraham said, "If only you would accept Ishmael!
Contemporary English V.	Then he asked God, "Why not let Ishmael inherit what you have promised me?"
Easy English (Pocock)	And Abraham said to God, `Let Ishmael live so that you are present there with him.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abraham said to God, “I hope Ishmael will live and serve you.”
The Message	Recovering, Abraham said to God, "Oh, keep Ishmael alive and well before you!"
New Century Version	Then Abraham said to God, "Please let Ishmael be the son you promised."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then AbraHam said to God, 'Accept IshmaEl to [stand] before You.'
Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham said to God, "But if Ishmael lives in front of you?"
Beck’s American Translation	Then Abraham said to God, “May Ishmael before you!”
Christian Community Bible	And Abraham said to God, “If only you would accept Ishmael as yours!”
God’s Word™	Then Abraham said to God, "Why not let Ishmael be my heir?"
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham said to God, 'May Ishmael live in your presence! That will be enough!'
New Simplified Bible	Abraham said to God: »If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!«
Revised English Bible	He said to God, ‘If only Ishmael might enjoy your special favour!’

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham said to God, If only Ishmael's life might be your care!
Conservapedia	Then Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"
The Expanded Bible	Then Abraham said to God, "Please let Ishmael ·be the son you promised [└live before you]."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Abraham said to GOD, “I wish that Ishmael might live in Your favour.”
HCSB	So Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael could live in Your presence!"
NET Bible®	Abraham said to God, "O that [The wish is introduced with the Hebrew particle וּ· (lu), “O that.”] Ishmael might live before you [Or "live with your blessing."]!"
NIV, ©2010	And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	And Abraham says to Elohim, O that Yishma El live at your face!
Hebrew Names Version	Avraham said to God, "Oh that Yishma'el might live before you!"
Kaplan Translation	To God, Abraham said, 'May it be granted that Ishmael live before you!'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Avraham said unto HaElohim, O that Yishmael might live before Thee!
The Scriptures 1998	And Abraham said to Elohim, “Oh, let Yishmaʿĕl live before You!”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Abraham to the Elohim, "O that Ishmael should live before You!"
Heritage Bible	And Abraham said to God, Oh that Ishmael might live before your face!
New RSV	And Abraham said to God, `O that Ishmael might live in your sight!'
Syndein	{Abraham's Prayer - (will be Rejected by God)} 1And Abraham said {'amar} unto 'Elohim/Godhead, "O that Ishmael might be 'my heir blessed by You' {idiom: literally is 'might live before You'}." {Note: Ishmael is now 13 years old and the 'apple of his father's eye. Abraham prays that Ishmael be the heir through which all that God promised him would be fulfilled - God rejects this in later verses.}.
Young’s Updated LT	And Abraham says unto God, “O that Ishmael may live before You;”

The gist of this verse: Abraham asks that Ishmael might be the recipient of God's promises to Abraham.

Genesis 17:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (רַמָא) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*]	*to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (מָהָרְבַא) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
ʾel (לֶא) [pronounced *ehl*]	*unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to*	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾĔlôhîym (מיִהלֹא) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: Then Abraham said unto the Elohim,... Abraham spoke to God back in Gen. 15:2–3, complaining that he had no heir. However, here, Abraham makes a specific request to God.

Genesis 17:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lû (וּל) [also writteen lûʾ (אוּל)] [pronounced *lue*]	*O that, would that, if only, if*	conjunction	Strong's #3863 (and #3808?) BDB #530
Yish^{e}mâʿêʾl (לאֵעָמְשִׁי) [pronounced *yish-maw-ĢALE*]	*whom God hears; God is hearing* and is transliterated *Ishmael*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3458 BDB #1035
châyâh (הָיָח) [pronounced *khaw-YAW*]	*to live, to have life, to revive, to recover health, to be healed, to be refreshed*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2421 & #2425 BDB #310
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (מיִנָפ) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*]	*face, faces countenance; presence*	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Genesis 17:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, they mean *before you, before your face, in your presence, in your sight, in front of you*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in Your judgment*.			

Translation:..."Oh that Ishmael might live before You." What Abraham is asking is for Ishmael to fulfill the promises which God has made to Abraham. According to the doctrine that Abraham knows, Ishmael is not a part of the promises that God made to him, and Abraham does not know why. Will Ishmael die at a young age?

However—and this is something that many people struggle with—Ishmael has free will. God made Ishmael, breathing the breath of life into him at birth, giving him physical and soulish life prior to birth—but Ishmael's free will is Ishmael's free will. We cannot have true free will and be able to turn around and blame God because we make a lot of bad choices. God either made us free or He didn't. The Bible indicates that we are free moral agents. We may be affected by our environment, our struggles and our victories, but, in the end, our free will is our responsibility.

So, Abraham, to some extent, is praying that God control Ishmael's free will. Ishmael could have been the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, but for Ishmael's free will. When God said, "He will be a wild ass of a man;" God was telling the direction that Ishmael's free will would take him in.

Abraham does love his son, Ishmael. This is his son by Little Egypt, Hagar, Sarah's personal slave. This young man is now 13 years old, and Abraham has great dreams for him. "We don't need some new child for this covenant; We've already got Ishmael; he's a good kid. Consider him." Abraham does not tell God what he is thinking—that the idea of he and Sarah having children strikes him as rather funny.

However, God knows the end from the beginning. God can see into the soul of Ishmael, now, and in the future. God knows about the children of Ishmael and about their children. So Ishmael will not be the son of promise. The covenant of God will not be fulfilled through Ishmael.

V. 18 reads: Then Abraham said unto the Elohim, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You." It is because of v. 18 that I believe that Abraham's general reaction was one of skepticism. He seems to think that God would change His plans midstream and decide to go with Ishmael. You see, Abraham has only one true son at this time and it is Ishmael; Abraham is quite indulgent and he loves this son. Sarah does not share his enthusiasm or his love because Ishmael is ot her son an dhe represents a moment of infidelity on Abraham's part (it does not matter that it was her idea; you must keep in mind that Sarah is a normal female). So Abraham is hoping against hope that Ishmael might be the son of God's promise. However, that was never God's plan.

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Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God Reconfirms His Covenant Through Abraham and Sarah

And so says Elohim, "On the contrary, Sarah, your woman, is one bearing to you a son and you have called his name Isaac. And I have established My covenant with him for a covenant perpetual for his seed after him.	Genesis 17:19	**But [lit., *and so*] Elohim said, "On the contrary, Sarah, your wife, will bear a son to you and you will call his name Isaac. Therefore [lit., *and so*], I have established My covenant with him for a perpetual covenant for his descendants after him.**

But Elohim said, "On the contrary—your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac. Furthermore, I have established my covenant as an everlasting covenant, both with him and his descendants after him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said, In truth Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you will call his name Izhak; and with him I will confirm My covenant for an everlasting covenant to his sons after him.
Latin Vulgate	And God said to Abraham: Sara your wife will bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for a perpetual covenant, and with his seed after him.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Elohim, "On the contrary, Sarah, your woman, is one bearing to you a son and you have called his name Isaac. And I have established My covenant with him for a covenant perpetual for his seed after him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And God said to Abraham, Truly, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son; and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God said to Abraham, Yea, behold, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to him and to his seed after him.
Significant differences:	The Hebrew has *God* rather than *Lord* (as per the targum). The Latin ignores the adverb in what God says. The different translations for the adverb, underlined above, are actually valid. The first verb is a feminine singular, Qal active participle in the Hebrew; it appears to be a translation from a Qal imperfect in all the ancient and English translations. There is a lâmed preposition which pretty much all ancient translations and English translations ignore (which is legitimate on occasion). As has been the case throughout this chapter, perfect tenses (completed action) by God are presented as future tenses in most ancient and English translations.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	But God answered: No! You and Sarah will have a son. His name will be Isaac, and I will make an everlasting promise to him and his descendants.
Easy English (Pocock)	But God said, `Sarah your wife will certainly have your baby son. You must call him Isaac. I shall make my *covenant again with him. It will be a *covenant that lasts for always. It will be a *covenant with him. And it will be with his *descendants, who will come after him.
Easy-to-Read Version	God said, "No! I said that your wife Sarah will have a son. You will name him Isaac. [This name means "he laughs."] I will make my agreement with him. That agreement will be an agreement that continues forever with all his descendants [A person's children and their future families.].
Good News Bible (TEV)	But God said, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac. I will keep my covenant with him and with his descendants forever. It is an everlasting covenant.
The Message	But God said, "That's not what I mean. Your wife, Sarah, will have a baby, a son. Name him Isaac (Laughter). I'll establish my covenant with him and his descendants, a covenant that lasts forever.
New Century Version	God said, "No, Sarah your wife will have a son, and you will name him Isaac [The Hebrew words for "he laughed" (v. 17) and "Isaac" sound the same]. I will make my

agreement with him to be an agreement that continues forever with all his descendants.

New Life Bible — But God said, "No, but your wife Sarah will give birth to your son. And you will give him the name Isaac. I will make My agreement with him and for his children after him, an agreement that will last forever.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible — But God told AbraHam: 'Look; Your woman SarAh will give birth to your son, and you should name him IsaAc. I will make my Sacred Agreement [with you] firm through him. an age-long Sacred Agreement, that I will be his God and [the God] of his seed that descends from him.

Ancient Roots Translinear — God said, "Sarah your woman will beget for you a son nevertheless. Call his name Isaac (laughed). I will raise my covenant with him and with his seed after him, a covenant forever.

Christian Community Bible — But God said, “Not at all! It is Sarah, your wife, who will give birth to your son and you will name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him and his descendants after him forever..

God’s Word™ — God replied, "No! Your wife Sarah will give you a son, and you will name him Isaac [He Laughs]. I will make an everlasting promise to him and his descendants.

New American Bible — God replied: Even so, your wife Sarah is to bear you a son, and you shall call him Isaac. It is with him that I will maintain my covenant as an everlasting covenant and with his descendants after him. Gn 11:30; 21:2; Ex 32:13; Sir 44:22.

NIRV — Then God said, "I will bless Ishmael. But your wife Sarah will have a son by you. And you will name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him. It will be a covenant that lasts forever. It will be for Isaac and for his family after him.

New Jerusalem Bible — But God replied, 'Yes, your wife Sarah will bear you a son whom you must name Isaac. And I shall maintain my covenant with him, a covenant in perpetuity, to be his God and the God of his descendants after him.

Revised English Bible — But God replied, ‘No, your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you are to call him Isaac. With him I shall maintain my covenant as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English — And God said, Not so; but Sarah, your wife, will have a son, and you will give him the name Isaac, and I will make my agreement with him for ever and with his seed after him.

Conservapedia — Then God said, "No, but your wife Sarah will definitely bear a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will establish My covenant with him for a lifetime covenant, and with his children after him.

The Expanded Bible — God said, "·No, [or Yes, but] Sarah your wife will have a son, and you will name him Isaac [[C]related to the verb meaning "to laugh"]. I will make my ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18] with him to be an ·agreement that continues forever [eternal covenant/treaty] with all his ·descendants [[L]seed].

Ferar-Fenton Bible — God Repeats His Promise to Ishmael
And God replied, “Feeble Sarah, your wife, shall give you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will fix My Covenant with him as an Everlasting Covenant for his race after him.

HCSB — But God said, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.

NET Bible® — God said, "No, Sarah your wife is going to bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac [Heb "will call his name Isaac." The name means "he laughs," or perhaps

"may he laugh" (see the note on the word "laughed" in v. 17).]. I will confirm my covenant with him as a perpetual [Or "as an eternal."] covenant for his descendants after him.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	God answered, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you are to call him Yitz'chak [laughter]. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.
exeGeses companion Bible	And Elohim says, Truly, in birthing, Sarah your woman births you a son; call his name Yischaq: and I raise my covenant for an eternal covenant with him and with his seed after him.
Hebrew Names Version	God said, "No, but Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You shall call his name Yitzchak. I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.
Kaplan Translation	God said, 'Still, your wife Sarah will give birth to a son. You must name him Isaac [Yitzchak in Hebrew. Literally, 'He will laugh,' or 'he laughed.']. I will keep My covenant with him as an eternal treaty, for his descendants after him.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Elohim said, Sarah thy isha shall bear thee ben indeed; and thou shalt call shmo Yitzchak; and I will establish My Brit (covenant) with him for a Brit Olam, and with his zera after him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	And God said, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son indeed; and you shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.
The Amplified Bible	But God said, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son indeed, and you shall call his name Isaac [laughter]; and I will establish My covenant or solemn pledge with him for an everlasting covenant and with his posterity after him.
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is the Elohim to Abraham, "Nevertheless, behold, Sarah, your wife is bearing you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I set up My covenant with him for a covenant eonian, and with his seed after him.
English Revised Version	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.
Heritage Bible	And God said, Sarah, your wife, shall bear to you a son indeed; and you shall call his name Isaac; and I have caused my covenant to rise with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him.
LTHB	And God said, Your wife Sarah truly shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I have established My covenant with him for a perpetual covenant with his seed after him.
New RSV	God said, `No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac.* I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.
Syndein	{God's Covenant with Abraham's Descendents through Isaac} And 'Elohiym/Godhead said {'amar'}, "Sarah your wife/woman {ishshah} shall bear you a son indeed. And you shall call his name Isaac {Yitschaq - name means laughter}. I have caused to establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant . . . and with his seed after him."

Young's Updated LT	And God says, "Sarah your wife is certainly bearing a son to you, and you have called his name Isaac, and I have established My covenant with him, for a covenant age-during, to his seed after him.
The gist of this verse:	God tells Abraham that his wife Sarah will bear him the child through whom God's covenant will stand; and that this covenant will be perpetuated through his ancestors.

Genesis 17:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*]	*to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾĔlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾăbâl (אֲבָל) [pronounced *uhb-AWL*]	*truly, indeed, verily, surely;* this adverb has corrective power, as in: *but, however, howbeit; on the contrary, contrariwise, nay rather (negative)*	adverb:	Strong's #61 BDB #6

Translation: But [lit., *and so*] Elohim said, "On the contrary,... The adverb found here is difficult. On the one hand, it appears to be an emphatic adverb, emphasizing what is said; on the other hand, its purpose seems to be contrarian. Since Abraham has asked for something that God is saying *no* to, understanding this adverb to have corrective power is the most logical approach.

Part of what is involved here is, Abraham is petitioning God; Abraham is praying to God (even though God is right there). Abraham is making a request and God is responding to Abraham's request immediately.

This is taken from memory, having learned it in R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s Bible classes. In every prayer request, there is the specific request and there is a desire behind the request. In our example, Abraham is requesting that God fulfill His promises to Abraham through Ishmael. However, Abraham knows that God has not made any such promise and Abraham does not simply want this son to be hung out to dry, as it were. So, "Let Ishmael live before You [to fulfill Your promises to me]" is Abraham's actual request; "Don't simply discard Ishmael" is Abraham's desire behind the request.

God's 4 Responses to Prayer

Responses	Application to this Passage
God honors the request and the desire behind the request.	In this case, God would be honoring His covenant to Abraham through Ishmael.

God's 4 Responses to Prayer	
Responses	**Application to this Passage**
God honors the request, but not the desire behind the request.	Abraham would honor His covenant through Ishmael, but Ishmael himself could die and early and painful death, after having a son, to whom the covenant would be passed.
God says no to the request, but honors the desire behind the request.	God does not honor His covenant through Ishmael, but God does not simply cast Ishmael aside.
God says no to both the request and the desire behind the request.	God does not honor His covenant to Abraham through Ishmael and God casts Ishmael aside.
Obviously, God used the 3rd response to the prayer. Notice that, God's answer to Abraham was given immediately, although it would take time for Abraham's prayer to be fulfilled.	
God will, in subsequent verses, make is clear how He is answering Abraham's prayer.	

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Genesis 17:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
Sârâh (הָרָשׂ) [pronounced *saw-RAW*]	*princess, noble woman;* transliterated *Sarah*	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
ʾîshshâh (הָשִׁא) [pronounced *eesh-SHAW*]	*woman, wife*	feminine singular noun with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
yâlad (דַלָי) [pronounced *yaw-LAHD*]	*to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget*	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*e]	*to, for, towards, in regards to*	directional/relational preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
bên (ןב) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...Sarah, your wife, will bear a son to you... God's covenant with Abraham still stands, but it will be fulfilled in a son born to Abraham and Sarah. Now, this is the first time that God specifically names Sarah in His promises to Abraham. This does not mean that Abraham's dalliance with Little Egypt was not a problem. God never directed Abraham to have sex with a woman outside of his marriage. The pattern for marriage had been set with Adam and Eve. Abraham learns the hard way that he cannot simply adhere to the norms and standards of his day (which certainly would allow for Abraham to raise up children through a slave girl.

The verb *shall bear* is a present active participle, and could be rendered, Sarah, your wife, is bearing you a son. Although we often translate this as continuous action in present time, the participle can refer to continuous action in the past, present or future. The participle emphasizes the continuousness of the action; indicating that this will

be a real pregnancy which will go on for a long time (9 months). In other words, Abraham and Sarah are not going to find some orphan waif somewhere and adopt him.

Genesis 17:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וֽ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qârâʾ (אָרָק) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*]	*to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name* [when followed by a lâmed]	2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced *shame*]	*name, reputation, character*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Yis^{e}châq (קָחְשִׂי) [pronounced *yihs^{e}-KHAWK*]	*he laughs; laughing;* transliterated *Isaac*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850

This is also spelled Yits^{e}châq (קָחְצִי) [pronounced *yihys^{e}-KHAWK*]. When you hear about manuscript discrepancies in the Old Testament, many of them simply involve alternate spellings.

Translation: ...and you will call his name Isaac. The verb here is actually a Qal perfect; God knows and possibly Abraham knows that he will name this boy Isaac, who has not even been conceived yet.

God specifically tells Abraham again that this child will be born through Sarah. Furthermore, God names Abraham's son-to-be with the name Isaac. *Isaac*, in the Hebrew, is Yis^{e}châq (קָחְשִׂי) [pronounced *yihs^{e}-KHAWK*] and it means *laughter*. In the Hebrew, *laugh* in the Qal imperfect, has the exact same consonants, with different vowel points. Since Abraham's first impulse is to laugh when God tells him that Isaac will be born, then God calls his son *laughter*.

God's response to Abraham falling on the ground and laughing is, "You like to laugh; here is a son—you can call him *laughing*."

Genesis 17:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וֽ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 17:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*]	*to cause to raise up, to cause to stand, to establish, to fulfill; to uphold, to perform* [a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise]	1st person singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b^{e}rîyth (תִּיְרִב) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

This preposition can also refer to being in one's possession or in one's keeping. This can also mean *to proceed from someone*. The key to this word is *close association with, close proximity to* beyond simple geographical proximity.

Translation: Therefore [lit., *and so*], I have established My covenant with him... God makes it clear that His covenant, that He has made with Abraham, will be established through this son that has not been born; laughing-boy.

Let's take a look back to v. 7, which reads (God is speaking to Abraham): "Therefore [lit., *and*], I will establish My contract between Me and you, and [between Me] and your descendants after you, for an everlasting contract for their generations, to be Elohim to you and to your descendants after you." This specific covenant, this covenant that God has been making with Abraham, this will be made also to Isaac.

Genesis 17:19e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
b^{e}rîyth (תִּיְרִב) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
ʿôwlâm (סָלוע) [pronounced *ǵo-LAWM*]	properly *what is hidden [time]; of [in] times past, from ancient time, old, antiquity, long duration, forever, perpetuity; for future time, futurity; of the world, worldly*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Translation: ...for a perpetual covenant... This covenant that God has made with Abraham will stand forever. This is not some temporary covenant that will last for 3 or 4 generations (or 30 or 40 generations).

Genesis 17:19f			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
zeraʿ (עֶרַ) [pronounced *ZEH-rahģ*]	*a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
ʾachar (רַחַא) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*]	*after, following, behind*	preposition with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation: ...for his descendants after him. God's covenant deals with the children that will come from Abraham's loins, so to speak. What God is doing is establishing a new race—the Jewish race. This line goes from Abraham to Isaac; it does not proceed through Ishmael. Abraham is Jewish; his brother *Sleepy* (Nahor) is not (Gen. 11:26). Abraham's nephew, Lot, who was raised as a son to Abraham, is not Jewish. Two Semitic but non-Jewish peoples will come from Lot (which is coming up in a couple of chapters).

And clearly here, God's covenant does not pass down through Ishmael, but it will pass down through Isaac.

God works through Isaac in 3 specific ways.

The Importance of Isaac	
Scripture	**Text/Commentary**
The Covenant	God's Covenant (His promises to Abraham) will specifically be passed along to Isaac and through his descendants; no other relative of Abraham will be a part of this covenant—not Nahor, not Lot and not Ishmael.
The Jewish Race	The Jewish race begins with Abraham, called the father of the Jewish race, and this is continued through Isaac only; Ishmael is not a Jew.
The Messiah	The line of the Messiah will go from Abraham through Isaac.

It is very likely that Isaac wrote the chapter or two in Genesis which centers on his life.

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God has been making promises to Abraham for a long time; and when he dies, these promises need to be transferred. Since God has spoken to Abraham continually about his seed (i.e., *his descendants*), Abraham will have to have some real descendants to whom God can transfer this promise. Furthermore, this covenant (contract) will be continued with this man's children as well.

———————————

And for Ishmael I have heard you. Listen, I have blessed him and I have made him fruitful and I have multiplied him in exceedingly, exceedingly. Two-ten princes he will sire and I have given him for a nation great.	Genesis 17:20	**Concerning Ishmael, I have heard you. Listen, I have blessed him and I have made him fruitful and I will greatly, exceedingly multiply him. He will sire 12 princes and I have given a great people to him.**

Concerning Ishmael, I have heard your request. Listen carefully: I have already blessed Ishmael and I have made him vigorous and I will greatly multiply his descendants. He himself will sire 12 princes alone and I have will make him into a great people.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And concerning Ishmael I have heard thy prayer. Behold, I have blessed him; and I will spread him abroad, and multiply him very greatly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will give him to be a great people.
Latin Vulgate	And as for Ismael I have also heard thee. Behold, I will bless him, and increase, and multiply him exceedingly: he shall beget twelve chiefs, and I will make him a great nation.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And for Ishmael I have heard you. Listen, I have blessed him and I have made him fruitful and I have multiplied him in exceedingly, exceedingly. Two-ten princes he will sire and I have given him for a nation great.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And as for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him, and will multiply him, and will make him exceedingly great; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.
Septuagint (Greek)	And concerning Ishmael, behold, I have heard you, and behold, I have blessed him, and will increase him and multiply him exceedingly; twelve nations shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

Significant differences:

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	As for Ishmael, I've heard your request. I will bless him and make him fertile and give him many, many descendants. He will be the ancestor of twelve tribal leaders, and I will make a great nation of him.
Contemporary English V.	I have heard what you asked me to do for Ishmael, and so I will also bless him with many descendants. He will be the father of twelve princes, and I will make his family a great nation.
Easy English (Pocock)	But I have heard your prayer for Ishmael. I have *blessed him. I will give to him a large family and very many *descendants. His family will have 12 princes in it. I shall make him into a great nation.
Easy-to-Read Version	“You mentioned Ishmael, and I heard you. I will bless him. He will have many children. He will be the father of twelve great leaders. His family will become a great nation.
Good News Bible (TEV)	I have heard your request about Ishmael, so I will bless him and give him many children and many descendants. He will be the father of twelve princes, and I will make a great nation of his descendants.
The Message	"And Ishmael? Yes, I heard your prayer for him. I'll also bless him; I'll make sure he has plenty of children--a huge family. He'll father twelve princes; I'll make him a great nation.

New Berkeley Version	I have also heard you regarding Ishmael and will indeed bless him, and render him fruitful. I will multiply him immensely; he will be ancestor to twelve princes and I will set him up for a great nation.
New Century Version	"As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will bless him and give him many descendants. And I will cause their numbers to grow greatly. He will be the father of twelve great leaders, and I will make him into a great nation.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'As for IshmaEl; {Look!} I have heard you and I have blest him. I will make him grow and multiply tremendously, so he will become the father of twelve nations, and I will make them a great people.
Ancient Roots Translinear	I heard you for Ishmael (God heard). I will bless him here, and make- him fruitful, and multiply him a ||hundredfold||. I will give him a great nation, and he will beget twelve chiefs.
God's Word™	I have heard your request about Ishmael. Yes, I will bless him, make him fertile, and increase the number of his descendants. He will be the father of 12 princes, and I will make him a great nation.
New American Bible	Now as for Ishmael, I will heed you: I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and will multiply him exceedingly. He will become the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation. Gn 16:10; 21:13, 18; 25:12-16.
NIRV	"As for Ishmael, I have heard you. You can be sure that I will bless him. I will give him children. I will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of 12 rulers. And I will make him into a great nation.
New Jerusalem Bible	For Ishmael too I grant you your request. I hereby bless him and will make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous. He will be the father of twelve princes, and I shall make him into a great nation.
New Simplified Bible	»Concerning 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.
Revised English Bible	But I have heard your request about Ishmael; I have blessed him and I shall make him fruitful! I shall give him many descendants; he will be a father of twelve princes, and I shall raise a great nation from him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	As for Ishmael, I have given ear to your prayer: truly I have given him my blessing and I will make him fertile and give him great increase; he will be the father of twelve chiefs, and I will make him a great nation.
Conservapedia	As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Look: I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will make him very, very numerous. He will have twelve princes for sons, and I will make him a great ethnic group.
The Expanded Bible	"As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will bless him and ·give him many descendants [└make him fruitful]. And I will cause their numbers to grow greatly. He will be the father of twelve great ·leaders [princes; chiefs; 25:16], and I will make him into a great nation.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And as for Ishmael, I have also heard you. My Blessing will be with him, and I will cause him to prosper and extend him very greatly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will grant him to become a great nation.
NET Bible®	As for Ishmael, I have heard you [The Hebrew verb translated "I have heard you" forms a wordplay with the name Ishmael, which means "God hears." See the note on the name "Ishmael" in 16:11.]. I will indeed bless him, make him fruitful, and give him a multitude of descendants [Heb "And I will multiply him exceedingly, exceedingly." The repetition is emphatic]. He will become the father of twelve

princes [For a discussion of the Hebrew word translated "princes," see E. A. Speiser, "Background and Function of the Biblical Nasi'," CBQ 25 (1963): 111-17.]; I will make him into a great nation.

NIV, ©2010 And 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.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible
And as for Yishma El, I hear you:
behold, I bless him - fruitbearing
and abound him mightily mighty;
he births twelve hierarchs
and I give him for a great goyim.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation.

Kaplan Translation I have also heard you with regard to Ishmael. I will bless him, and make him fruitful, increasing his numbers very greatly. He will father twelve princes [Enumerated in Genesis 25:13-15.], and I will make him into a great nation.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And as for Yishmael, I have heard thee; hinei, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve nasi'im (princes, rulers) shall he father, and I will make him a goy gadol (great nation).

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible And as for Ishmael, I have heard and heeded you: behold, I will bless him and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; He will be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. [Fulfilled in Gen. 25:12-18.]

Concordant Literal Version And as to Ishmael, behold! I hear you. Behold! Bless him do I, and fruitful do I make him, and increase him exceedingly exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I make of him a great nation.

Context Group Version And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: look, I have esteemed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes he shall father, and I will make him a great nation.

English Standard Version 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.

Green's Literal Translation And as to Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall father twelve chiefs, and I will make him a great nation.

Heritage Bible And as for Ishmael, I have attentively heard you. Behold, I have knelt down with goodness to him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly, exceedingly; he shall beget twelve princes, and I will give him a great people.

NASB 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 [Lit beget twelve princes], and I will make him a great nation.

Syndein {Ishmael's Line will Be Blessed by God Also} "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he sire, and I will make him a great nation {Ishmael is the father of the Arabic Nations - but not the 'heir' of Abraham}."

Young's Updated LT As to Ishmael, I have heard you; lo, I have blessed him, and made him fruitful, and multiplied him, very exceedingly; twelve princes he sires, and I have made him become a great nation.

The gist of this verse: God did hear Abraham's request concerning Ishmael, and God would bless Ishmael by making him fruitful and by multiplying his line, to have 12 princes and to make a great nation of him.

Genesis 17:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (ו̣ or ו) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Yish^{e}mâʿêʾl (לאֵעָמְשִׁי) [pronounced *yish-maw-ĢALE*]	*whom God hears; God is hearing* and is transliterated *Ishmael*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3458 BDB #1035
shâmaʿ (עַמָשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-MAHĢ*]	*to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of*	1st person singular, Qal perfect; with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033

Translation: Concerning Ishmael, I have heard you. What Abraham said to God was, in essence, a prayer. He is making a rquest to God, which is one of the functions of prayer. The fact that God is right there before him, does not make this anything less of a prayer. One of the reasons that Abraham's laughing was not sinful is, God had heard Abraham's request. That suggests that Abraham is in fellowship.

God appears to enjoy plays on words. So we find such plays on words throughout Scripture, and this is one of them. *Ishmael* means *God hears;* and God is here telling Abraham, "I have heard you." This is not a joke, but God uses language playfully at times.

The fact that God tells Abraham that he hears him relates back to God's response to our prayers. God knows what Abraham has prayed and God knows what Abraham's motivation is. First of all, Abraham understands what he has learned from God well enough to be recognize that Ishmael is not a part of God's covenant to him. However, Abraham loves Ishmael, and he asks God to look at this circumstance again and to reconsider. God understands that the request is to make Ishmael the recipient of God's covenant. However, the intent behind the prayer is that God not simply lay Ishmael aside; that God not just toss Ishmael aside, without a future.

At some point, your child may pick up a rock, and his mother may pray for him to become a great geologist; and, when he throws it, you may pray that he become a great pitcher. God will hear that prayer (assuming that you are both believers) and He may say *no* to both requests, but answer positively the intent behind them, to make your son successful, as a result of hard work and training. Essentially, that is what is happening here with regards to Abraham's prayer to God about Ishmael.

Genesis 17:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*]	*lo, behold,* or more freely, *observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out*	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
bârak^{e} (בָּרַךְ:) [pronounced *baw-RAHK^{e}*]	*to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless* [as God, man and other created things], *therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone* [with a blessing]; *to curse*	1st person singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced *ayth*]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally *to, toward*	affixed to a 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Translation: Listen, I have blessed him... God tells Abraham that he has already blessed Ishmael. He blessed Ishmael in eternity past. Even though Ishmael is the father of a great many Arabs, that does not mean that he is an unbeliever. Some Arabs do believe in Jesus Christ. That God says that He has blessed Ishmael suggests to me that he is being blessed, in part, because he is a believer. Undoubtedly, both his mother and Abraham have told him about speaking to God at the well; and Ishmael has believed them and believed in this God. Secondly, Ishmael is blessed because he is related to Abraham. The best thing in the world is to have and continue to have a relationship with someone like Abraham.

If you are a sorry believer or an unbeliever who is accidentally reading this; and you do not intend to change. You do not intend to pursue doctrine or you do not intend to believe in Jesus, the God of Abraham and Isaac, then find someone who is a growing believer, who believes in Jesus Christ and who learns the Word of God under a doctrinal pastor, and affix yourself to that person. Become his friend. Do favors for him now and again. Treat him honestly and fairly. Ask him to pray for you, now and again. God will notice and you will be blessed for this.

This can be some old widow, who is getting infirm in her body, and yet her faith in Jehovah God is strong. Give her a hand in whatever way she might need it. Mow and rake her lawn; do chores for her once a week—whatever. God will bless you for this, whether you are a believer, an immature believer or an unbeliever.

God knew in eternity past about Ishmael. He knew how Abraham would feel about him. And God has blessed Ishmael in eternity past.

Genesis 17:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 17:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pârâh (הָרָפ) [pronounced *paw-RAW*]	*to cause to become fruitful, to make fruitful; to increase with offspring*	1st person singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #6509 (& #6500) BDB #826
ʾêth (תֵא) [pronounced *ayth*]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally *to, toward*	affixed to a 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Translation: ...and I have made him fruitful... Ishmael is only 13 at this time, so he does not have a wife or any children. However, God has already determined that he will have a wife and that he will have many children.

As an aside, children here, as throughout the Bible, are seen as blessings from God. The idea that a woman would be pregnant and then terminate the pregnancy and kill her child shows a complete misunderstand of the plan of God. Whatever this child is, no matter what the circumstances are, this child is a blessing.

Genesis 17:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râbâh (הָבָר) [pronounced *raw^{b}-VAWH*]	*to make [do] much; to multiply, to increase; to give much; to lay much; to have much; to make great; many* [as a Hiphil infinitive construct]	1st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7235 BDB #915
ʾêth (תֵא) [pronounced *ayth*]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally *to, toward*	affixed to a 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b^{e} (בְ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning*	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
m^{eʾ}ôd (דְאֹמ) [pronounced *m^{e}-ODE*]	*exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547
m^{eʾ}ôd (דְאֹמ) [pronounced *m^{e}-ODE*]	*exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

Translation: ...and I will greatly, exceedingly multiply him. Because God has blessed Ishmael and because God has made him fruitful, God will greatly multiply Ishmael. This means, not just in the first generation, but for many generations after.

Remember when God was promising the land of Canaan to Abraham and God said, the land of these people will belong to you, and then God rattled off a list of names of the peoples who inhabited that land? The Kenites, the

Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Raphaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. So, do you know any Kenites? Do you know any Kennizzites? Do you know any Hittites? These were all great peoples. But you don't know any of them today. But do you know any Jews? I would hope so! God has preserved His people the Jews from this point on.

The Ishmaelites will be a new group and they will be multiplied. However, at some point, they will intermix with the Midianites, and we seem to lose track of them after that.

You may notice a parallel to v. 2, where God said the same thing to Abraham.

Genesis 17:20e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sh^{e}nêym (מֵינְשׁ) [pronounced *sh^{e}-NĀM*]	*two, two of, a pair of, a duo of*	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
ʿâsâr (הָשָׂע) [pronounced *ģaw-SAWR*]	*ten; –teen* [resulting in numbers 11–19]	masculine/feminine singular noun	Strong's #6240 BDB #797
nâsîy' (יִשְׂנ) [pronounced *naw-SEE*]	*one lifted up, leaders, chiefs, princes*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5387 BDB #672
yâlad (דַלְי) [pronounced *yaw-LAHD*]	*to cause a woman to bring forth; to have children; to impregnate a woman; to make [the earth] fruitful; to create; to sire, to father*	3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

Translation: He will sire 12 princes... Ishmael himself will have 12 children, all of whom will head up Arabic groups.

God is quite specific here and in the other prophecies about Ishmael. He will cause the seed of Abraham to multiply to a huge number of descendants through Ishmael; however, here, as in the other two passages which deal with Ishmael, there will be but one nation which will come from him. God further narrows this down to being the land facing the Jews (which is sometimes translated, *east* of the Jews) (Gen. 16:12). Abraham is said to be the father of a great nation (singular in Gen. 12:2) in reference to Israel in general, where the various Jewish client nations to God are seen as a contiguous whole. God also promises that Abraham will be the father of a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:4) and that Sarah would be a mother of nations (Gen. 17:16), which is a reference to the various Jewish client nations taken separately and to Arabia (Abraham will also have other children besides Ishmael and Isaac). We have two basic kinds of prophecies in the Bible; the near and the far prophecies and a portion of this one will be fulfilled in Abraham's day. Ishmael will have 12 sons. All 12 will become great leaders in their area, which will become one country.

Genesis 17:20f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 17:20f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâthan (נָתָן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*]	*to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make*	1st person singular, Qal perfect with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l*^{e}]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.			
gôwy (גּוֹי) [pronounced *GOH-ee*]	*people, nation*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156
gâdôwl (לוֹדָּג) [pronounced *gaw-DOHL*]	*large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing*	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

Translation: ...and I have given a great people to him. Those who will come from Ishmael will become a great people. The word used here, gôwy, can refer to a people or to a nation.

God respects Abraham's wishes. This is important to note, and many of us just breeze right by this verse without recognizing what it says. God is sovereign, but God has given us free will. God has given us self-determination. God respects our free will. Abraham loves his son Ishmael, and, although God will not grant Abraham's specific request (which is for Ishmael to be the recipient of God's promises to Abraham), Ishmael will sire royalty and God will make him into a great nation. So, God will take into consideration the intent of Abraham's prayer. Because Abraham is speaking to God and making a request, that is a prayer.

With every prayer that we make to God, there is a desire behind that prayer. We may pray for a million dollars, but the desire behind that prayer might be to have some financial security. God may not give us a million dollars, but He may give us financial security. So, He has not granted the specific request of this prayer, but He has granted us the desire behind it.

Let's use the example of, you have met this person that you are in love with, and you think they are wonderful, and you pray to God that you will marry this person.

God's 4 Answers to Prayer	
Specific Request; the Desire	**God's Answer**
God answers the specific request that we make and the desire behind the request.	Your prayer is to marry a particular person, but the desire behind that request is to marry someone that you are in love with, and will continue to be in love with. So God grants the request as well as the motivation or desire behind the request. This does turn out to be your right person that God designed for you.
The prayer is answered, but the desire behind the prayer is not.	God lets you marry that doll, but she turns out to be a horrid person who looked really hot to you at one time, and now, not so much. You have to deal day in and day out with her soul, and you do not find that to be particularly scintillating.
God does not answer your specific petition, but He answers the desire behind that petition.	You do not marry that specific person, but you do marry someone who is far more suitable for you—someone for whom you continue to have an abiding love for.
God says not to the petition and to the desire behind the petition.	You do not marry that particular person, and, whether you marry or not, the end result is, you do not spend your life with a partner whom you are in love with.

Now, I did leave two factors out of this equation: your volition and the volition of the person that you are in love with. However, I am simply presenting the general principle. In most cases of prayer, the volition of others is involved and God does not reach into our souls and change our volition.

This is how God answers all prayers. There are 4 options. When we pray, always recall God's promise from Rom. 8:28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose (WEB). This does not mean that your life is going to be great. Your life will be taken care of by God if *you love Him*. There is only one way to love God, and that is through Bible doctrine. You have to get to know God; you must desire to know Him.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

What is important here, and you need to have confidence in this: God hears your prayers and considers them and answers all of them (that is, assuming that you have prayed to God while in fellowship). Your free will counts in God's plan.

So, God will bless Ishmael, this son that Abraham adores, but not as a party to this contract. God's covenant to Abraham is going to be established with a son of Abraham, a son born from Sarah.

And My covenant I have established with Isaac, who will bear to you Sarah to the appointed time the this in the year the following."	Genesis 17:21	**However, I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you this set time in the following year."**

However, I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will give birth to for you at this time next year."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	But My COVENANT will I establish with Izhak, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time in the year after.
Latin Vulgate	But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sara will bring forth to you at this time in the next year.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And My covenant I have established with Isaac, who will bear to you Sarah to the appointed time the this in the year the following."
Peshitta (Syriac)	But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.
Septuagint (Greek)	But I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time, in the next year.
Significant differences:	The ancient translations made this begin as an adversative sentence, some which the Hebrew does not do very often. So, even if the sentence is set up to contrast a previous thought, the Hebrew almost never uses a disjunction. Again, God's actions, with respect to God, are outside of time; however, to us in time, they are sometimes future acts; so the first verb is often translated as a future tense.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	But I will set up my covenant with Isaac, who will be born to Sarah at this time next year.
Contemporary English V.	But your son Isaac will be born about this time next year, and the promise I am making to you and your family will be for him and his descendants forever.
Easy English (Pocock)	It is with Isaac that I shall make my *covenant again. Sarah will give birth to Isaac at this time next year.'
Easy-to-Read Version	But I will make my agreement with Isaac. Isaac will be the son that Sarah will have. This son will be born at this same time next year."
Good News Bible (TEV)	But I will keep my covenant with your son Isaac, who will be born to Sarah about this time next year."
New Berkeley Version	But My Covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear you this season next year.
New Living Translation	But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	However, My Sacred Agreement will be established with IsaAc, whom SarAh will bear to you at this time next year.'
Ancient Roots Translinear	But I *will* raise my covenant with Isaac, which Sarah *will* beget by this meeting in another year."
Christian Community Bible	But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, the child Sarah will have this time next year."
God's Word™	But I will make my promise to Isaac. Sarah will give birth to him at this time next year."
New American Bible	But my covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you by this time next year. Gn 18:14; 21:2; 26:2-5; Rom 9:7.
New Jerusalem Bible	But my covenant I shall maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear you at this time next year.'
Revised English Bible	But my covenant I shall fulfil with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	But my agreement will be with Isaac, to whom Sarah will give birth a year from this time.
Conservapedia	But I will establish My covenant with Isaac, and Sarah will bear him to you on this date next year."
The Expanded Bible	But I will make my ·agreement [covenant; treaty; 6:18] with Isaac, the son whom Sarah will have at this same time next year."
HCSB	But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year."
New Advent Bible	But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sara shall bring forth to you at this time in the next year.
NIV, ©2010	But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	But I raise my covenant with Yischaq, whom Sarah births you at this season in the next year.
Kaplan Translation	But I will keep My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you this time next year.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	But My Brit (covenant) will I establish with Yitzchak, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at mo'ed hazeh (this set time) next year.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	But My covenant, My promise and pledge, I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.
Concordant Literal Version	Yet My covenant will I set up with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear for you at this, the appointed time another year.
Heritage Bible	And I will cause my covenant to rise with Isaac whom Sarah shall bear to you at this appointed meeting in the next year.
King James 2000 Version	But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto you at this set time in the next year.
Modern KJV	But I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time in the next year.
New RSV	But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.'
Young's Updated LT	And My covenant I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this appointed time in the next year."

The gist of this verse: God promises to establish His covenant with Isaac, and Sarah will bear this son in a year.

Genesis 17:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (ו֫ or ו) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 17:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b^{e}rîyth (תִּיבְּ) [pronounced *b^{e}reeth*]	*covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract*	feminine singular noun with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*]	*to cause to raise up, to cause to stand, to establish, to fulfill; to uphold, to perform* [a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise]	1st person singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
Although Owen calls this a direct object here, it is actually the preposition (there is no difference between them in the Hebrew, apart from meaning and use).			
This preposition can also refer to being in one's possession or in one's keeping. This can also mean *to proceed from someone*. The key to this word is *close association with, close proximity to* beyond simple geographical proximity.			
Yis^{e}châq (יִצְחָק) [pronounced *yihs^{e}-KHAWK*]	*he laughs; laughing;* transliterated *Isaac*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850

Translation: However, I will establish My covenant with Isaac,... God here repeats a portion of v. 19, telling Abraham that there is no doubt about this; God has established His covenant with a man named Isaac, who has not been born yet. From Abraham's perspective, this has not happened yet, so most translators put this verb in the future tense; however, it is in the perfect tense, the accomplished state, because God had accomplished this already, as God resides outside of time.

Genesis 17:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *uh-SHER*]	*that, which, when, who, whom*	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced *yaw-LAHD*]	*to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget*	3rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition with the 2nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 17:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced *saw-RAW*]	*princess, noble woman;* transliterated *Sarah*	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Translation: ...whom Sarah will bear to you... More repetition—this is the son that Sarah will bear to Abraham. The idea is that, even though God has only said a few things to Abraham, He is using repetition to make certain that this sinks into Abraham's brain. There isn't going to be a different son; no one is going to act as a stand-in, not for Abraham and not for Sarah.

God is making this as clear as possible He has told Abraham 3 times that this son would be born through Sarah (Gen. 17:16, 19, 21) and has told Abraham twice that this son would be the one with whom God kept His covenant (Gen. 17:19, 21). God believes in teaching by repetition. At the time of this prophecy, Sarah had not conceived and it had been very likely a long time since they had sexual relations. Our Lord will return again and repeat these things to Abraham so that Sarah will overhear.

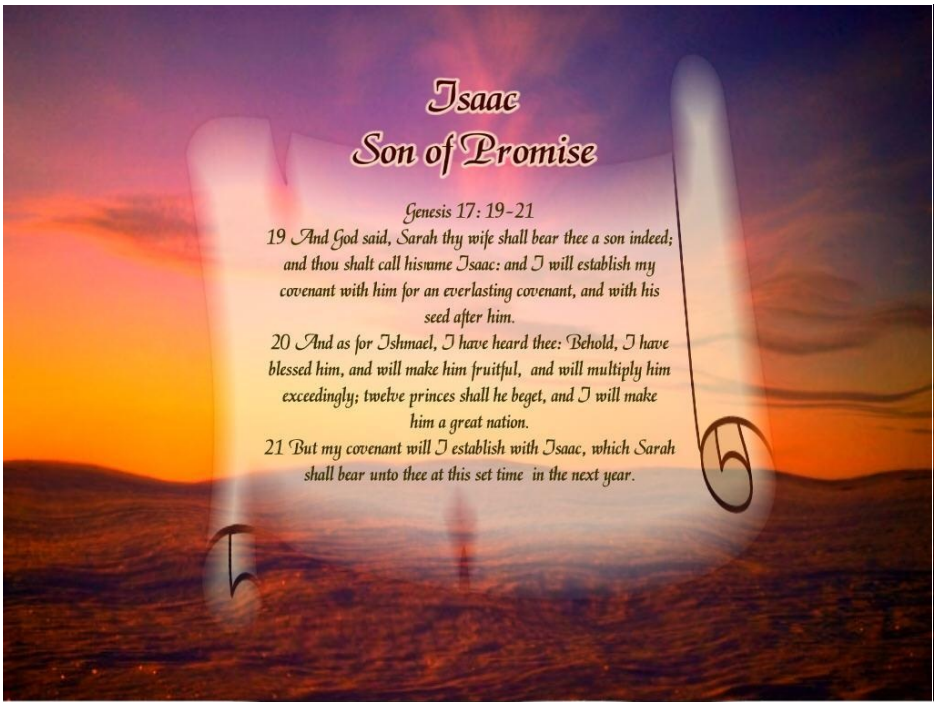
Genesis 17:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced *l^e*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto;* it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to;* in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into,* as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by,* which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter,* used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because;* Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about,* used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of* anyone, *for* anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.			
môwʿêd (מֹועֵד) [pronounced *moh-ŞADE*]	*a specific (set, pre-determined, appointed) time; a point in time; a sacred season, a set feast; an appointed meeting; an appointed place [where people meet; of an assembly]; a specific sign or signal; an assembly*	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4150 BDB #417
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*]	*here, this, this one; thus;* possibly *another*	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Translation: ...this set time... Although Genius suggests that this statement means *about this time,* the word for time tends to be very specific; the demonstrative adjective tends to increase its specificity. Finally, the lâmed preposition is used to be associated with time, as a point of time. So God is being quite specific here. It is not unreasonable for Abraham to expect for this birth to take place 360 days from this point.

Genesis 17:21d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
b^{e} (ב} [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shânâh (הָנָשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*]	*year*	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
Shânâh repeated with the bêyth preposition in between indicates a circle or a return; the idea is, this means *yearly*. Here, with the definite article, this appears to be a specific year, namely the next.			
ʾachêr (רֵחַא) [pronounced *ah-KHEHR*]	*another, following, next; other* as well as *foreign, alien, strange*	feminine singular adjective; with the definite article	Strong's #312 BDB #29

Translation: ...in the following year." The birth of Isaac will take place next year. This indicates clearly to us that Sarah is not pregnant now; Abraham laughing indicates that it has been quite awhile since he and Sarah have had sex; so God is telling him that this will all happen within this next year, with the baby being born next year at this time.



Isaac is the Son of Promise (graphic) from **Walls In HD**; accessed December 6, 2013. The translation is: But Elohim said, "On the contrary—your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac. Furthermore, I have established my covenant as an everlasting covenant, both with him and his descendants after him. Concerning Ishmael, I have heard your request. Listen carefully: I have already blessed Ishmael and I have made him vigorous and I will greatly multiply his descendants. He himself will sire 12 princes alone and I have will make him into a great people. However, I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will give birth to for you at this time next year."

3 months after God delivers this promise to Abraham, he and his wife Sarah will have sex. In fact, we don't know if this happens just once or on multiple occasions, but Abraham will be sexually revived on at least one occasion and he will impregnate his wife, now named Sarah. Sarah will find herself to be fertile once again.

Now is the right time in God's plan to move forward. 13 years ago, was the wrong time for Abraham to impregnate Sarah. Abraham, back then, was still trying to bring God's promises to pass by listening to and obeying his wife. She said, "Take my slave girl" and Abraham did. He listened to Sarai and did what she asked. Sarai was *his prince*. They were not ready at that time to be parents to the child of promise. When Sarah became *a princess,* then they were nearly ready for their first child.

You may think that this ought to be the right time for you to marry, for your business to take off, for your stock picks to skyrocket, for you to be advanced in your job; and yet, none of these things are happening. You might even be praying to God several times a day about these things. There is a right time for God to answer your prayers. You may not be ready for a marriage; you may not be ready for prosperity, and you may not be ready for the added responsibilities that come with success or with a promotion. 13 years ago, Abraham and Sarah were not ready for the next step in God's plan, and they proved this by bringing Little Egypt into the picture. And Abram was every bit as culpable as Sarai because he went along with her idea. Abram should have realized that he could not move the plan of God forward by sin. Even this very day, they were not ready; a year from now, they will be ready to have a son, a son who will take upon himself the promises that God made to Abraham.

Part of the purpose of circumcision was so that Abraham, every time he would urinate, he would remember the promises of God, and how God took that which was dead and made it alive. Every Jew who has been circumcised, should think the same thing. God took that which was dead—Abraham's phallus—and He made it alive; and that God did this to illustrate being born again (or, *being born from above;* i.e., *being born from God*).
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Acts 7:1–8 Interlude:

Acts 7:1–8 summarizes much of this. Saint Stephen has been hauled in front of the Sanhedrin (the supreme court of Israel), because of the things which he was saying. It is a dangerous time for a national entity when ideas are seen as so dangerous as to be put on trial (this is different than an organization that advocates the violent overthrow of the government).

Acts 7:1 Then the high priest said, "Then do you so hold these things?" These doctrines about Jesus Christ is what the high priest is talking about. Stephen, and other disciples, had been spreading the message of Jesus Christ, our Savior, Who had died and was resurrected, and then was taken by God the Father into heaven. This same Jesus is the Messiah, and this is what Stephen taught.

In the audience of the Sanhedrin are a number of unlikely allies—Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and from Asia (Acts 6:9)—all of whom objected to Stephen's teaching, and hauled him before the Sanhedrin to call him out on him teaching about Jesus.

Here is one man, Stephen, sitting before 71 professional judges, including the high priest of Israel, and there would have been a rather large audience as well, of a variety of people wanting to see Stephen get his comeuppance.

Stephen is asked to be a witness against himself, to tell them what he believes in. He then responds.

Acts 7:2 And he [Stephen] said, "Men, brothers, and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.

The *brothers* in the audience were fellow Jews. The *fathers* were those who were older and had great authority and, ostensibly, great wisdom. *Men* refers to anyone else in the audience.

Stephen will go to the Old Testament, to the father of the Jews, and use him to illustrate what he himself believes in. This goes back to Gen. 12, when God told Abraham to go to the Land of Promise. Abraham was first in Mesopotamia, not far from modern-day Bagdad. He and his family moved up to Haran, which meant that they moved northwest along the Euphrates. This would be not far from the land of Canaan.

Acts 7:3 "And He [God] said to him [Abraham], 'Go out from your land and from your relatives, and come into a land which I shall show you.' (Gen. 12:1)

As we have already studied, God came to Abraham and told him to leave his family and to go to a land that God would show him. So, Abraham first went with his family from the heart of Mesopotamia up to Haran; and then he separated from his family and went into the Land of Promise.

Acts 7:4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, he moved into this land in which you now dwell.

The Chaldeans lived in the east, more or less in the country of Iran today (which is the cradle of civilization, as this is where man first settled after the flood). Then Abraham was told to move to the land of promise, which was Israel, where all of these Jewish judges listening to Stephen are right now. And, so far, this is nothing for them to become incensed about; everything that Stephen has said, is what they believe.

Acts 7:5 And He [God] gave him [Abraham] no inheritance in it, no, not even a foot-breadth. And He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, there being no child to him.

Now God gives Abraham nothing in this land. He promised this land to Abraham's descendants, even though, Abraham had no children. These are things which most of those in the audience believe. As we have studied, Abraham moves around, going from pasture to pasture, and, during this time, develops a number of good relationships with the people of the land.

What Stephen is doing is, he is taking information which they all know and believe and attempting to logically move them toward the gospel.

Acts 7:6 And God spoke in this way, that his seed would be a tenant in another land, and that they would enslave it [Abraham's seed] and oppress it four hundred years.

In fact, Abraham's original descendants would be slaves in another land, and they would be oppressed by the Egyptians for about 400 years (Gen. 15:13 Ex. 12:40–41 Gal. 3:17). So, with this phrase, Stephen takes these men beyond where we are in Gen. 17 and into the book of Exodus.

Acts 7:7 And God said, 'I will judge the nation to whom they shall be in bondage,' and 'after these things they will come out and will serve Me in this place.' (Gen. 15:14).

God promised that He would judge Egypt, and then bring the Jews into the land, the Land of Promise, the land that God would give to them. Those in the audience are listening, and they agree with this. They do not like Stephen, but they agree with what he has said so far.

Acts 7:8 And He [God] gave him [Abraham] the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham fathered Isaac and circumcised him the eighth day. And Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs."

Then God gives Abraham the covenant of circumcision. Circumcision represents regeneration; in circumcision, God takes the sexual deaths of Abraham and Sarah and He makes them both sexually and reproductively alive, which **represents regeneration**. Abraham fathers Isaac and circumcises him on the 8th day, and Isaac fathers Jacob and Jacob fathers the 12 patriarchs of Israel.

And all of the members of Stephen's audience—those men, brothers and fathers—have all been circumcised.

This is as much as Stephen had to say about this period of time. However, we will return to him once more in the next lesson, to see how his sermon ends.

In the previous lesson, we looked at St. Stephen's summary of the history of Abraham, taking us to this point of circumcision in Genesis:

Acts 7:1–8 Then the high priest said, "Then do you so hold these things?" And he [Stephen] said, "Men, brothers, and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. And He [God] said to him [Abraham], 'Go out from your land and from your relatives, and come into a land which I shall show you.' (Gen. 12:1). Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, he moved into this land in which you now dwell. And He [God] gave him [Abraham] no inheritance in it, no, not even a foot-breadth. And He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, there being no child to him. And God spoke in this way, that his seed would be a tenant in another land, and that they would enslave it [Abraham's seed] and oppress it 400 years. And God said, 'I will judge the nation to whom they shall be in bondage,' and 'after these things they will come out and will serve Me in this place.' (Gen. 15:14). And He [God] gave him [Abraham] the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham fathered Isaac and circumcised him the eighth day. And Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs."

Stephen has been hauled into the sanhedrin by a very hostile audience, and this is the testimony that he gives, which, grudgingly, they must agree to. So, what Stephen said to this audience, while he is on trial, is a summary of the events that we have been studying for the past 6 months or so, as well as a summary of the first third of the book of Exodus.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Acts 7:51–60 Interlude:

However, before we return to Abraham, let's follow Stephen's speech to its conclusion: Stephen covers much more of Israel's history (which he summarized in Acts 7:9–50), which we will cover at another time. However, this is how it all ends. Stephen then says:

Acts 7:51 "O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do.

There have been many generations of Jews who have opposed God. Stephen has given example after example where this has occurred in Jewish history (which examples, we skipped over). Calling these judges before whom he stands, *stiff-necked* conjures up images of the pharaoh of Egypt. Saying that they are uncircumcised of heart and ears means, they have not been regenerated; they have not been made alive. Therefore, they cannot hear what the Spirit of God says.

Being uncircumcised of heart is actually an Old Testament theme. Moses, speaking to the people, urged them, "Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked." (Deut. 10:16). And Stephen says to his Jewish audience: "O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do." How can they deny this? Throughout Israel's history, they had followed through with the circumcision of the flesh, but these Jews, on many occasions, were stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart—in other words, they had not even been regenerated. One of the points that we have been studying is, circumcision is a ritual, and this ritual represents being born again. Calling his Jewish audience *stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart* was a great insult to them, even though it is true. It means that they hear God, and they resist Him.

Stephen continues:

Acts 7:52 Which of the prophets did your fathers *not* persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of Whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers;..

Stephen speaks of the prophets as a whole, and asks these judges of Israel, *which prophets did Israel not persecute?* That is tough for them to answer. Nearly all of the prophets were rejected and persecuted by the Jews and by the hierarchy of Jewish government (which the sanhedrin represented at that point in their history). These Jews to whom Stephen was speaking revered the prophets, but they had a difficult time recognizing and applying the fact that Jews in the past had persecuted these same prophets whom they revered. Persecuting prophets in Israel was not some new thing that had never happened before; this is how Israel had always treated their prophets.

The Jews of that day thought that everything was fine. They were very religious and very legalistic, and they performed all kinds of rituals, as found in the Law; so they figured that they were pretty tight with God. Stephen points out that the Jews, historically, have been at odds with God on many occasions; and, on such occasions, God sent them prophets to set them straight. And they persecuted those prophets.

They even killed prophets who foretold the coming of the Just One, and then Stephen makes certain that they know Who the Just One is: "[the One] Whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers." Everyone in the sanhedrin knows that this was Jesus Christ. Yet Stephen does not even utter His Name.

Enough time had passed for the people to take stock of what happened. Many of these religious types were at the trials of Jesus, and they were aware that these trials were sham justice. There was no real justice. Jesus was railroaded to the cross. Somehow, the two greatest systems of Law, Jewish law and Roman law, had been subverted, and a man innocent of all charges was led to the cross by means of some of these very same judges.

Acts 7:53 ...who [referring back to the ancestors of those in the court] received the Law through disposition of angels [see Deut. 33:2], and did not keep it."

These very men, who stand in judgement of Stephen, ready to condemn him to death by stoning, had received the Law and yet they do not keep it. They were stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart, just like their fathers who had persecuted the prophets before them.

Acts 7:54 And hearing these things, they were cut to their hearts. And they gnashed against him with their teeth.

Quite obviously, this disturbed these Jews tremendously. These judges and those in the audience could no longer hide their hatred of Jesus Christ, which was expressed in their hatred for Stephen. They began to grind their teeth, many probably involuntarily, muttering under their breath.

I want you to notice something else: Stephen, in his entire speech before the sanhedrin, does not utter the name *Jesus,* and yet, everyone knew of Whom Stephen spoke in v. 52. They do not want to hear the name of Jesus; they do not even want His Person implied. Just realizing that Jesus is Who Stephen is speaking about angers them.

One of the years that I taught at a public school, we brought an evangelist (Gary Horton) to speak to the students, and this was an unusual thing for both him and the students, to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to assemblies of 600 students in a public school. However, what was quite amazing is, he gave the gospel clearly and unequivocally without uttering the name of Jesus. Yet, everyone in the room knew of Whom he was speaking. He gave the gospel in clear, unequivocal terms, and yet, no one heard the name of Jesus uttered, but they knew Who Gary Horton was talking about.

Acts 7:55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, looking up intently into Heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Here, we will get a taste of dying grace, to a great man who spoke the truth to the most influential men in all of Israel. He was about to be killed by men filled with anger and hatred, and all he had done was speak the truth to them. He held no weapon against them; he had done no one any harm; he simply spoke the truth, and these men wanted to kill him.

People hate it when you speak the truth, and now, even as then, there are real attempts to stop people from speaking the truth. Most Muslim countries will not even allow you to bring a Bible into their country. There are countries where certain laws favoring homosexuality have resulted in churches being taken to court for teaching portions of the Bible. Since the Arab Spring in Egypt, persecutions of Christians have been routine occurrences, where their churches and houses are burned. It is all about the truth being spoken in the devil's world.

Acts 7:56 And he said, "Listen, I see Heaven opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

Stephen now tells them what he is seeing. He looks and he sees heaven opening up with Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of God.

Acts 7:57 And crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears and ran on him with one accord.

Here is how angry these men were. Stephen has, in a couple of sentences, spoke of Jesus Christ, but without naming Him by name, and these men are so angered, and they get up as one, cover their ears, so that they do not want to hear, and they all charge Stephen in anger, as a mob. Remember, they are in a court of law, and they have hauled Stephen in there to have him charged with whatever and then have him punished—they want this done with some semblance of legality—and yet they cannot even stand to hear his testimony. His words burn into their souls.

Let's say you proclaimed Jesus as the only Savior before a crowd of Muslims in a mosque; what do you suppose might happen? What Stephen is facing is very similar because he also is speaking to men of uncircumcised hearts and uncircumcised ears. As it stands written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day." (Rom. 11:8; Jer. 5:21).

Acts 7:58 And throwing him outside the city, they stoned him. And the witnesses laid their cloaks down at the feet of a young man named Saul.

This mob apparently grabs Stephen and they haul him outside of the city. It does not appear even that a sentence was pronounced. Stephen got them so upset that this mob simply attacked him. They no longer needed to hear the sanhedrin weigh in.

There is a young trusted pharisee there, and they lay their overcoats down before him, because they are going to work up a sweat stoning Stephen to death.

Jerusalem, in less than 40 years, would be taken down by the Romans. The Jews, as a whole, did not respond to God's calling, and, as a result, the Romans would crush them. They refused to be governed, even though the Romans had treated the Jews with respect and had given them a fair amount of autonomy. But their negative volition toward Jesus Christ resulted in the destruction of their nation.

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, who was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

At this point, Stephen finally calls out the name *Jesus,* asking for Him to receive Stephen's spirit.

Acts 7:60 And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Stephen's final act was a prayer for the very men who stoned him to death.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Let's now return to God and Abraham. I realize that we went off topic, but I could not simply leave Stephen in mid-speech without taking this to the end.

So we go back 2000 years. This is the interchange between Abraham and God; Abraham wants his son, Ishmael, to be the recipient of the covenant from God, and God tells him that Ishmael will be blessed, but the covenant would go to Isaac, a son Abraham would sire with Sarah.

Gen 17:18–21 And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" God said, "On the contrary, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year."

Recall that Abraham fell down before God and began laughing; however, he apparently attempts to keep this to himself, and gathers himself and asks for God's covenant to be fulfilled in Ishmael.

This is where we discussed the concept of prayer—the specific thing for which we pray and the intent behind that prayer—and how God answers prayer.

So God would clearly bless Ishmael, but His covenant would be with Isaac, the son not yet conceived. In this way, God would answer Abraham's prayer.

Furthermore, God would Abraham a son through Sarah, something which had not been specified before. It would be a year from now when Sarah would bear Abraham a child, so 3 months would pass before Abraham impregnated Sarah. The word *set time* is actually, môwʿêd (דֵּעוֹמ) [pronounced *moh-ĢADE*], which means, *a specific (set, pre-determined, appointed) time; a point in time; a sacred season, a set feast; an appointed meeting*. Strong's #4150 BDB #417. Therefore, Abraham is going to expect this to happen 360 days from that point. There is no rough approximation implied here.

———————————

And so he finishes to speak with him; and so goes up Elohim from over Abraham.	Genesis 17:22	**Because he came to the end of speaking with him, Elohim ascended from over Abraham.**

Because he had finished speaking with him, God went up from over Abraham.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And He ceased speaking with him; and the Glory of the Lord ascended from Abraham.
Latin Vulgate	And when he had left off speaking with him, God went up from Abraham.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he finishes to speak with him; and so goes up Elohim from over Abraham.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And when God was through talking with him, he went up from Abraham.
Septuagint (Greek)	And He left off speaking with him, and God went up from Abraham.
Significant differences:	The targum has *Glory of the Lord* rather than *God*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	When God finished speaking to him, God ascended, leaving Abraham alone.
Contemporary English V.	God finished speaking to Abraham and then left.
Easy English (Pocock)	Then God stopped his conversation with Abraham and God went away.
Easy-to-Read Version	After God finished talking with Abraham, God went up {into heaven}.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When God finished speaking to Abraham, he left him.
New Century Version	After God finished talking with Abraham, God rose and left him.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well at that, God stopped talking to him, and He left AbraHam.
Ancient Roots Translinear	He finished speaking with him, and God ascended above Abraham.
Christian Community Bible	When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went away from him..
God's Word™	When God finished speaking with Abraham, he left him.
New American Bible	When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God departed from him.
Revised English Bible	When he had finished talking with Abraham, God left him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And having said these words, God went up from Abraham.
Conservapedia	Then God stopped talking to Abraham and went up from him.
The Expanded Bible	After ·God [ᴸhe] finished talking with Abraham, God ·rose and left him [ᴸwent up from Abraham].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then He ceased to converse with Him, and the Divine Messenger went up from Abraham.
HCSB	When He finished talking with him, God withdrew from Abraham.
NET Bible®	When he finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him [Heb "And when he finished speaking with him, God went up from Abraham." The sequence of pronouns and proper names has been modified in the translation for stylistic reasons. God went up from him. The text draws attention to God's dramatic exit and in so doing brings full closure to the scene.].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	And he finishes wording with him and Elohim ascends from Abraham:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	And when He was done speaking with him, God was gone from Abraham.
Kaplan Translation	When He finished speaking to him, God went up [This indicates that the prophetic vision ended (Moreh Nevukhim 1:10). See note on Genesis 11:5.], [leaving] Abraham.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And He left off speaking with him, and Elohim went up from Avraham.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And God stopped talking with him and went up from Abraham.
Concordant Literal Version	And finishing is He speaking with him, and ascending is the Elohim from Abraham.
English Standard Version	When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.
Heritage Bible	And he ended talking with him, and God ascended from Abraham..
King James 2000 Version	And he quit talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.
Webster's Bible Translation	And he ceased talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.
Young's Updated LT	And He finished speaking with him, and God goes up from Abraham.

The gist of this verse: God ascended after speaking to Abraham.

Genesis 17:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 17:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâlâh (הָלָכ) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*]	*to complete, to finish; to prepare; to come to an end; to consume, to waste, to destroy, to annihilate; to make pine away*	3rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3615 BDB #477
lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l^{e}*]	*to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by*	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbar (רַבָּד) [pronounced *daw^{b}-VAHR*]	*to be spoken of; to be decreed; spoken for*	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Translation: Because he came to the end of speaking with him,... The two wâw consecutive here could simply indicate successive action. I have translated this in somewhat of a causal way. God had come to the end of all that He needed to say to Abraham, and therefore, God left. Sort of like when God completed restoring the earth, then He *rested*.

Genesis 17:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿâlâh (הָלָע) [pronounced *ģaw-LAWH*]	*to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʾĔlôhîym (מִיהֹלֱא) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
min (מִן) [pronounced *mihn*]	*from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than*	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿal (לַע) [pronounced *ģahl*]	*upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from*. Some translators rendered this *away from*.

Genesis 17:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: ...Elohim ascended from over Abraham. There is more here than God walking away. God is going up from over Abraham. Now, this can simply indicate that God went up from companionship with Abraham an enjoyment of fellowship with Abraham); but recall also that Abraham has fallen onto the ground twice. So, there is a double meaning here. God physically went up from Abraham, suggesting that God left Abraham by moving vertically. However, there is also the implication that there was companionship and fellowship that God is leaving as well.

Jesus Christ returned to the third heaven. The word which is translated *went up* is ʿâlâh (הָלָע) [pronounced *ģaw-LAWH*] and it means *to ascend* although it has a variety of meanings depending upon the context and the action involved. Abraham has enough spiritual information to get him through the next couple weeks. He has to see to the circumcision of those males who are with him of the circumcision of himself.

As is the case in many English translations, there are nuances which are hidden in the Hebrew. There is a very common preposition which is normally translated *with,* but that is not found here. Instead, there are two prepositions which together mean. *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from*. So, there is more here than God simply walking away. God is going up from over Abraham. Now, this can simply indicate that God went up from companionship with Abraham an enjoyment of fellowship with Abraham); but recall also that Abraham has fallen onto the ground twice. So, there is a double meaning here. God physically went up from Abraham, suggesting that God left Abraham by moving vertically. However, there is also the implication that there was companionship and fellowship that God is leaving as well.

God gave Abraham all the information that he needed at that time. Abraham had prayed to God with God being right there in front of him, and God gave him the disposition of that prayer. God made it clear that His covenant with Abraham still stood, but that covenant would be continued with Isaac, who would be born to two sexually dead people, Abraham and Sarah. From death, God would bring life. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins. But God, who is abundant in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. By grace you are saved! (Eph. 2:1, 4–5).

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Abraham Demonstrates His Faith Through Circumcision

And so takes Abraham Ishmael his son and all born [in] his house and all purchased [with] his silver, every male in men of a house of Abraham, and so he circumcises a flesh of their foreskin in a self-same the day the this as when spoke with him Elohim.	Genesis 17:23	**Therefore, Abraham takes Ishmael, his son, all [those] born [in] his house, and all those purchased [with] his silver—every male among the mortals [in] Abraham's compound [lit., *house*]; and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins in the very same day just as Elohim spoke with him.**

Then Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all those born in his compound along with all those he purchased with money—every male, in fact, within Abraham's compound; and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on the very day that Elohim spoke with him doing what God had commanded.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all brought up in his house, and all bought with money, every male among the household people of Abraham, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the same day in which the Lord spake with him.
Latin Vulgate	And Abraham took Ismael his son, and all that were born in his house: and all whom he had bought, every male among the men of his house: and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin forthwith the very same day, as God had commanded him.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so takes Abraham Ishmael his son and all born [in] his house and all purchased [with] his silver, every male in men of a house of Abraham, and so he circumcises a flesh of their foreskin in a self-same the day the this as when spoke with him Elohim.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham took Ishmael his son and all of those that were born in his house and all of those that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in that very day, as God had said unto him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all his home-born servants, and all those bought with money, and every male of the men in the house of Abraham, and he circumcised their foreskins in the time of that day, according as God spoke to him.

Significant differences:

Although all of the ancient versions translate the first verb as a past tense (at least in the English), the Hebrew is an imperfect ("present") tense, which, when combined with wâw consecutive and other imperfect tenses, indicates successive action. In fact, this constant urge to translate an imperfect this way may have led to the concept of the wâw conversative[19] (a concept I reject entirely).

The (English translation of the) targum has *brought up* instead of *home-born*.

The targum also lacks the *as which, just as* prior to God speaking to him. The idea his, Abraham is obeying God.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	On that same day Abraham obeyed God by circumcising Ishmael. Abraham was also circumcised, and so were all other men and boys in his household, including his servants and slaves. He was ninety-nine years old at the time, and his son Ishmael was thirteen.
Easy English (Pocock)	So Abraham took his son Ishmael. He took all the males that were born in his *household. And he also took all the males that he had bought. He took every male in his *household and he *circumcised their *foreskins on that day. He did that exactly as God had told him.
Easy-to-Read Version	{God had told Abraham to circumcise [Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.] all the men and boys in his family.} So Abraham gathered Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house together. Abraham also gathered together the

[19] The wâw consecutive "converts" the imperfect tense to a perfect tense.

	slaves that were bought with money. Every man and boy in Abraham's house was gathered together, and they were all circumcised. Abraham circumcised them that day, just like God told him.
The Message	Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all his servants, whether houseborn or purchased--every male in his household--and circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins that very day, just as God had told him.
New Berkeley Version	...and Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the males born in his household; also those bought with his money, every male from his communal group, and on that very day circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, as God had told him.
New Century Version	Then Abraham gathered Ishmael, all the males born in his camp, and the slaves he had bought. So that day Abraham circumcised every man and boy in his camp as God had told him to do.
New Life Bible	Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all who were born in his house, and all who were bought with his money, and every man and boy who lived in his house. And he cut off their piece of skin that very day, as God had told him to do.
New Living Translation	On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his household, including those born there and those he had bought. Then he circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, just as God had told him.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then AbraHam took his son IshmaEl, all of his home-born servants, all those whom he had bought with money, and all the males in AbraHam's house, and circumcised their foreskins on that very day, just as God told him.
Christian Community Bible	Abraham then took Ishmael, his son, as well as all those born in his house and all those he had bought to be slaves, all the males in the household of Abraham, and circumcised their foreskins that same day as God had told him..
God's Word™	So Abraham took his son Ishmael, everyone born in his household, and everyone bought with money-every male in his household-and circumcised them that day, as God had told him.
New American Bible	Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all his slaves, whether born in his house or acquired with his money-every male among the members of Abraham's household-and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that same day, as God had told him to do.
NIRV	On that very day Abraham circumcised his son Ishmael. He also circumcised every male who was born in his house or bought with his money. He did exactly as God had told him.
New Jerusalem Bible	Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, all the slaves born in his household or whom he had bought, in short all the males among the people of Abraham's household, and circumcised their foreskins that same day, as God had said to him.
New Simplified Bible	On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him.
Revised English Bible	Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, everyone who had been born in his household and everyone he had bought, every male in his household, and the same day he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins as God had commanded him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all whose birth had taken place in his house, and all his servants whom he had made his for a price, every male of his house, and on that very day he gave them circumcision in the flesh of their private parts as God had said to him.

Conservapedia	Abraham took his son Ishmael, and every man born in his household, and every man that had been bought with his money, in short, every male among the people of Abraham's household, and circumcised them in the foreskin that very day, as God had ordered him.
The Expanded Bible	Then Abraham ·gathered [└took] Ishmael, all the males ·born in his camp [└of his house], and ·the slaves he had bought [└those bought with money]. So that day Abraham circumcised [└the flesh of his foreskin of] every man and boy in his camp as God had told him to do.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Abraham accordingly took his son Ishmael, and all who were born in his family, and all bought with money, every male of the people of the household of Abraham, and circumcised the foreskin of their bodies on that very day which God spoke to him.
HCSB	Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or purchased with his money--every male among the members of Abraham's household--and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that very day, just as God had said to him.
New Advent Bible	And Abraham took Ismael his son, and all that were born in his house: and all whom he had bought, every male among the men of his house: and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin forthwith the very same day, as God had commanded him.
NET Bible®	Abraham took his son Ishmael and every male in his household (whether born in his house or bought with money) [Heb "Ishmael his son and all born in his house and all bought with money, every male among the men of the house of Abraham."] and circumcised them [Heb "circumcised the flesh of their foreskin." The Hebrew expression is somewhat pleonastic and has been simplified in the translation] on that very same day, just as God had told him to do.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	...and Abraham takes Yishma El his son and all birthed in his house and all the chattels of silver - every male among the men of the house of Abraham; and circumcises the flesh of their foreskin in this selfsame day, as Elohim worded to him.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all his homeborn slaves and all those he had bought, every male in Abraham’s household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that very day, as God had spoken to him.
Kaplan Translation	Abraham took his son Ishmael, everyone born in his house, and every [slave] bought for money - every male in his household - and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins. [It was] on the very day [Literally, 'on that very day' (cf. Rashi). Others have, 'in broad daylight' (Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer 29; see note on Genesis 7:13). Some say that this took place on Yom Kippur (ibid.). According to others, it was on Passover (cf. Rashi on Genesis 19:3).] that God had spoken to him.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Avraham took Yishmael bno, and all that were born in his bais, and all that were bought with his kesef, every zachar among the men of Avraham's bais; and circumcised the basar of their arelah in the very same day, as Elohim had said unto him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And Abraham took Ishmael his son and all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among [those] of Abraham's house, and circumcised [them] the very same day, as God had said to him.

Concordant Literal Version	And taking is Abraham Ishmael, his son, and all who are born in his household, and all acquired with his money, every male among the mortals of Abraham's household, and he is circumcising the flesh of their foreskin on this very day, as the Elohim had spoken to him.
LTHB	And Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all the ones born of his house, and all that were bought with his silver, every male among the men of the house of Abraham. And he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins in that same day, even as God spoke to him.
Modern KJV	And Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his silver; every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins in the same day, even as God said to him.
Syndein	{Verses 23-27: Rite of Circumcision Fulfilled by Abraham} And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all {males} who were born in his house, and all {males} who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as 'Elohim/Godhead had decreed/'communicated categorically' {dabar} unto him.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham takes Ishmael his son, and all those born in his house, and all those bought with his money—every male among the men of Abraham"s house—and circumcises the flesh of their foreskin, in this self-same day, as God has spoken with him.

The gist of this verse: Abraham takes all of the males in his household and circumcises them, in obedience to God on that very same day.

I want to remind you about vv. 1–3a and 15–17:

Gen 17:1–4 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face.

Gen 17:15–17 And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name." And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him." 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?"

So this strikes Abraham as being rather funny, so much so, that he falls to his face again, before God, and he thinks about how preposterous this all is. However, notice how he responds to what has said. This is what Abraham does this very day:

Genesis 17:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*]	*to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542

Genesis 17:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾAbᵉrâhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahbᵛᵉ-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yishᵉmâʿêʾl (יִשְׁמָעֵאל) [pronounced *yish-maw-ĢALE*]	*whom God hears; God is hearing* and is transliterated *Ishmael*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3458 BDB #1035
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: Therefore, Abraham takes Ishmael, his son,... Immediately, Abraham obeys God. There was no indication that he was supposed to think about this or let it ruminate in his mind. So, Abraham began to collect the males in his household, starting with Ishmael, the son he loves.

Genesis 17:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wᵉ (or vᵉ) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kohl*]	with a plural noun, it is rendered *all of, all; any of*	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
yâlîyd (יְלִיד) [pronounced *yaw-LEED*]	*born;* possibly *son*	verbal adjective; masculine plural adjective construct	Strong's #3211 BDB #409
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]	*house, residence; household, habitation* as well as *inward*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: ...all [those] born [in] his house,... *House* here refers to the Abrahamic compound, which would have been a small city of tents, of Abraham's employees, his slaves and all of their families. Over these past 20 years or so, life for these people has been normal. They work for Abraham and they apparently worship the God of Abraham, but they do have wives and they do have families. So there are children who were born in his house, and they were to be a part of this.

Genesis 17:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kohl*]	*every, each, all of, all; any of, any*	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
miq^{e}nâh (מִקְנָה) [pronounced *mihk-NAW*]	*a purchase, a buying; a document of purchase; cost, price, a purchase-price*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #4736 BDB #889
keçeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced *KEH-sef*]	*silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3701 BDB #494

Translation: ...and all those purchased [with] his silver... Abraham, throughout the years, has purchased slaves (he apparently came back from Egypt with Hagar, a present for his wife. These people belong to him. Abraham gathers up the males that he has purchased.

Genesis 17:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kohl*]	*every, each, all of, all; any of, any*	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
zâkâr (זָכָר) [pronounced *zaw-KAWR*]	*male, male offspring (whether animal or people);* this word is not used as a collective for males and females	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2145 BDB #271
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʾănâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced *uh-NAW-seem*]	*mortals, mortal men, mankind; fallen men, depraved men, feeble men [liable to disease and calamity]; peons, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble*	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35

When this word is used for man, the emphasis is either a reference to man in his fallen state (the emphasis does not have to be upon sin; it can be upon man's fragility and mortal nature) or upon the lower classes of man, *the peons, peasants, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble*.

Genesis 17:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bayith (תַּיִב) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]	*house, residence; household, habitation* as well as *inward*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (מָהָרְבַא) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation:...—every male among the mortals [in] Abraham's compound [lit., *house*];... This words suggest that there were no males left out of this gathering. Every male in his compound—all of the fallen males, those with sin natures (which is all males in his compound) are gathered up.

The Hebrew does the same thing that the English did for a long time; when referring to men and women, the term men was often used. *Adam* can refer to the first male, to man and to mankind. Here it is a reference to mankind. *Male* is the word zâkâr (רָכָז) [pronounced *zaw-KAWR*] and this is a word which distinguishes men from women in the human and animal realm and is used quite often when dealing with circumcision.

Genesis 17:23e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced *wah*]	*and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because*	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to circumcise; to cut off*	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
ʾêth (תֵא) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bâsâr (רָשָׂב) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*]	*flesh; body; animal meat*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1320 BDB #142
ʿor^{e}lâh (הָלְרֹע) [pronounced *ģohr^{e}-LAW*]	*foreskin (uncircumcised); foreskin of a tree [fruit from the tree for the first 3 years]*	feminine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6190 BDB #790

Translation: ...and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins... This takes a great deal of faith from Abraham and from those men who work for him and are owned by him. Many of these are adults; and all of them can feel this; and Abraham takes them out that day and says, God said that I have to circumcise you, and so, that is what we're doing. No one appears to opt out at this time.

The Qal imperfect of *circumcise* means that Abraham very likely did all the circumcising (he did not farm out this duty as a Hiphil stem would indicate. However, *was circumcised* is in the Niphal stem, which is passive; that is, Abraham did not circumcise himself. As a male, I can testify that this process for grown men took a great deal of faith and trust in God.

Wikipedia **says** that the earliest records of circumcision go back to 23rd century B.C., where we have both **written and artistic evidence** of circumcision occurring in Egypt. This predates Abraham.

Genesis 17:23f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿetsem (עֶצֶם) [pronounced *ġeh-TSEM*]	*bone, substance, self; self-same; corporeality, duration, existence,* and therefore *identity*	feminine singular substantive construct	Strong's #6106 BDB #782
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced *yohm*]	*day; time; today* (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûwʾ (הוּא) [pronounced *hoo*]	*that, this*	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with the definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
The bêyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean *in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day*.			

Translation: ...in the very same day.... The words emphatically tell us that Abraham did it that very day. He spoke to God, God left, and then Abraham went out and gathered up all of the males in his compound. All of these words taken together indicate that there is no hesitation.

Genesis 17:23g

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k^{e} (כְּ) [pronounced *k^{e}*]	*like, as, according to; about, approximately*	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*]	*that, which, when, who, whom*	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kaʾăsher (כַּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *kah-uh-SHER*] means *as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as*. Back in 1Sam. 12:8, I rendered this *for example*.			
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw^{b}-VAHR*]	*to be spoken of; to be decreed; spoken for*	3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
ʾĔlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*]	*God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels;* transliterated *Elohim*	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...just as Elohim spoke with him. This phrase is also important. Abraham does this in obedience to God. Now, let's say that Abraham had some doubts. He has been speaking to God over a period of decades, but only a few times, and he still does not have this son that God promised him, through whom the promises would all be fulfilled—yet Abraham acts in obedience to God. And this obedience is not an easy thing for a man to do. There are so many religious drawings portraying this and that scene in Biblical history, but I have never seen the one when Abraham is speaking to all of the males from his compound, and one of them has his hand raised, and he is asking, "You want to cut a little bit of skin away from what now?"

What is the alternative? God has given Abraham the alternative; those who will not do this will be cut off from him. Now, every one of the adult males know about Lot, whom they helped save. He went off on his own, and his life has been a bowl of crap since then. They have prospered; they have been blessed. So the men there understand that there is something to their association with Abraham. They are blessed by being associated with Abraham, who is associated with the God of the Universe.

They know that 318 of them defeated the Aramæans in battle, the greatest army, perhaps, of their day. Being separated from Abraham is not what any of these men want. So, Abraham may have laughed at first, but he staggered not at the promises of God, but was strong in faith.

Gen 17:23 Then 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.

Despite Abraham's disagreements with God and desiring to make Ishmael his heir, Abraham still does exactly what God asks him to do—he circumcises himself and all the males of his household. This takes a great deal of faith, both for Abraham and for those males who are under him (those who are his slaves and/or those who work for him).

———————————

And Abraham, a son of ninety and nine a year in his circumcising flesh of his foreskin.	Genesis 17:24	**And Abraham [was] 99-years-old when he was circumcised [in] the flesh of his foreskin.**

And Abraham was 99-years-old when he was circumcised in the flesh of this foreskin.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham was the son of ninety and nine years when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin.
Latin Vulgate	Abraham was ninety and nine years old, when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And Abraham, a son of ninety and nine a year in his circumcising flesh of his foreskin.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham was ninety-nine years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Significant differences:	If a person is over the age of 1, we affix the plural noun *years* to his age; the Hebrews often used the singular noun for *year*. Whereas we say *99-years-old,* the Hebrews say *a son of ninety-nine year*. The temporal nature of the second phrase is legitimate, and will be discussed in the Hebrew exegesis.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Easy English (Pocock)	Abraham was 99 years old when he received *circumcision.
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised,....
New Life Bible	Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he had the religious act done of cutting off his piece of skin.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham circumcised the flesh of his foreskin as a son of ninety nine years.
Beck's American Translation	Abraham was 99 when he was circumcised.
New American Bible	Abraham was ninety-nine years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised,... Circumcised: circumcision was widely practiced in the ancient world, usually as an initiation rite for males at puberty. By shifting the time of circumcision to the eighth day after birth, biblical religion made it no longer a "rite of passage" but the sign of the eternal covenant between God and the community descending from Abraham. Gn 17:10; Rom 4:11.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he underwent circumcision.
Conservapedia	Abraham was 99 years old, when he was circumcised in his foreskin.
The Expanded Bible	Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he ·was circumcised [^{L}circumcised the flesh of his foreskin].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the foreskin of his body.
NET Bible®	Now Abraham was 99 years old [Heb "the son of ninety-nine years."] when he was circumcised [Heb "circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin" (also in v. 25).];...

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Kaplan Translation	Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised on the flesh of his foreskin.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Avraham was ninety shanah and nine, when he was circumcised in the basar of his arelah.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Heritage Bible	And Abraham was a son of ninety-nine years, the flesh of his foreskin being circumcised.
LTHB	And Abraham *was* a son of ninety nine years when being circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Abraham [was] ninety and nine years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham is a son of ninety and nine years in the flesh of his foreskin being circumcised.

The gist of this verse: Abraham is circumcised at age 99.

Genesis 17:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
tish^{e}ʿîym (תִּשְׁעִים) [pronounced *tish-ĢEEM*]	*ninety*	indeclinable noun; adjective; archaic plural	Strong's #8673 BDB #1077
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
têshaʿ (תֵּשַׁע) [pronounced *TAY-shahģ*]	*nine, ninth*	masculine singular noun; ordinal or cardinal numeral	Strong's #8672 BDB #1077
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*]	*year*	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040

Translation: And Abraham [was] 99-years-old... Abraham was circumcised right away, that day, so obviously, he is still 99-years-old.

Genesis 17:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	Niphal infinitive construct with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered *when [such and such happens]*. It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*]	*flesh; body; animal meat*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1320 BDB #142

Genesis 17:24b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
ʿor^{e}lâh (הָלְרֹע) [pronounced *ǵohr^{e}-LAW*]	*foreskin (uncircumcised); foreskin of a tree [fruit from the tree for the first 3 years]*	feminine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6190 BDB #790

Translation: ...when he was circumcised [in] the flesh of his foreskin. As mentioned in the Hebrew exegesis, the bêyth preposition used with the infinitive construct often sets up a temporal sense; therefore, we use the word *when*.

Abraham may have laughed at what God told him, and he may have doubted this for a short time, but notice that Abraham has acted upon what God said. He was circumcised on the same day that God told him to be circumcised.

Personally, I have no problems with a child being circumcised at 8 days (or whatever). A full grown male being circumcised? That just does not seem like something I would easily agree to participate in. However, Abraham agrees to this—immediately. He may think about this who situation for a few minutes or even a few hours, but on this same day, Abraham has himself and all of the other males at his compound circumcised. That takes a great deal of faith. In this, he will be set apart to God.

Recall that circumcision represents new life in Abraham. It represents his being born again. Sexually, he was dead; yet God will make him sexually alive. From this new life will spring the Jewish race, a people set apart to God, a people whose life comes about as a result of Abraham's faith, Abraham's sexual rejuvenation, and Abraham's obedience. Abraham does this first, and God will revive him and Sarah.

Note the timing. There is no Isaac yet; there is no pregnancy yet; Sarah may not even know about any of this yet. Abraham, based on his faith in Jehovah Elohim, has everyone, including himself, circumcised. Abraham acts on faith.

And Ishmael, his son, a son of three-teen a year in his circumcising flesh of his foreskin.	Genesis 17:25	**His son, Ishmael, [was] 13-years-old when he was circumcised [in] the flesh of his foreskin.**

His son, Ishmael, was 13-years-old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	This verse is not found in the targum.
Latin Vulgate	And Ismael his son was full thirteen years old at the time of his circumcision.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And Ishmael, his son, a son of three-teen a year in his circumcising flesh of his foreskin.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

Significant differences:

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Easy English (Pocock)	Ishmael was 13 years old when he received it.
Easy-to-Read Version	And Ishmael, his son, was 13 years old when he was circumcised.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...and his son Ishmael was thirteen.
New Berkeley Version	...and his son Ishmael at thirteen.
New Life Bible	His son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he had the religious act done of cutting off his piece of skin.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And his son IshmaEl was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
God's Word™	His son Ishmael was 13 years old when he was circumcised.
NIRV	His son Ishmael was 13.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he underwent circumcision.
Conservapedia	His son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in his foreskin.
The Expanded Bible	And Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised [^{L}in the flesh of his foreskin].
New Advent Bible	And Ismael his son was full thirteen years old at the time of his circumcision.
NIV – UK	...and his son Ishmael was thirteen;...

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	...and Yishma El his son is a son of thirteen, being circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Kaplan Translation	His son Ishmael was thirteen years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Yishmael bno was thirteen shanah, when he was circumcised in the basar of his arelah (foreskin).
The Scriptures 1998	And Yishmaʿĕl his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Heritage Bible	And Ishmael was a son of thirteen years, the flesh of his foreskin being circumcised..
LTHB	And his son Ishmael was a son of thirteen years *when* being circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Ishmael his son [was] thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
Young's Updated LT	And Ishmael his son is a son of thirteen years in the flesh of his foreskin being circumcised.

The gist of this verse: Ishmael was also circumcised at this time, at the age of 13.

Genesis 17:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yish^{e}mâʿêʾl (לאֵעָמְשִׁי) [pronounced *yish-maw-ĢALE*]	*whom God hears; God is hearing* and is transliterated *Ishmael*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3458 BDB #1035
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
shâlôsh (שָׁלֹשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-LOHSH*]	*a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome*	numeral; masculine singular noun	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
ʿâsâr (הָשֵׂע) [pronounced *ģaw-SAWR*]	*ten; –teen* [resulting in numbers 11–19]	masculine/feminine singular noun	Strong's #6240 BDB #797
shânâh (הָנָשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*]	*year*	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040

Translation: His son, Ishmael, [was] 13-years-old... Ishmael has to get to an age old enough where he and his mother can leave the Abraham camp.

Genesis 17:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	Niphal infinitive construct with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered *when [such and such happens]*. It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
ʾêth (תֵא) [pronounced *ayth*]	generally untranslated; occasionally *to, toward*	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bâsâr (רָשָׂב) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*]	*flesh; body; animal meat*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1320 BDB #142

Genesis 17:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿor^{e}lâh (הָלְרֹע) [pronounced *ǵohr^{e}-LAW*]	*foreskin (uncircumcised); foreskin of a tree [fruit from the tree for the first 3 years]*	feminine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6190 BDB #790

Translation: ...when he was circumcised [in] the flesh of his foreskin. Circumcision represents regeneration. We certainly know that Hagar believes in the Revealed Lord; and it is very likely the Ishmael has as well.

Ishmael, a male in Abraham's household, was also circumcised. God did have plans for Ishmael, which plans are suited to his volition and his limited spiritual growth.

In a self-same of the day the this was circumcised Abraham and Ishmael, his son.	Genesis 17:26	**In that same day, [both] Abraham and Ishmael [lit., *Ishmael, his son*] were circumcised.**

Both Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised on that very same day.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	In the same day, in the fourteenth year, was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.
Latin Vulgate	The self-same day was Abraham circumcised and Ismael his son.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	In a self-same of the day the this was circumcised Abraham and Ishmael, his son.
Peshitta (Syriac)	In that very day was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael his son.
Septuagint (Greek)	And at the period of that day, Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son,...
Significant differences:	The targum, which appears to be, in part, a commentary, adds "in the fourteen year."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Easy English (Pocock)	Abraham and Ishmael received *circumcision on the same day.
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham and his son were circumcised on that same day.
Good News Bible (TEV)	They were both circumcised on the same day.
New Life Bible	Abraham and his son Ishmael had this religious act done that very day.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham circumcised the same day as Ishmael his son.
God's Word™	That same day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised.
Revised English Bible	Both Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised on the same day.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Abraham and Ishmael, his son, underwent circumcision on that very day.
Conservapedia	Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised on the exact same day,...
The Expanded Bible	Abraham and his son were circumcised on the same day.

NIV – UK	Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that same day.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Avraham and Yishma'el his son were circumcised on the same day;...
exeGeses companion Bible	...in this day Abraham and Yishma El his son become circumcised.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Thus Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very day;...
Kaplan Translation	On the very day that Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised,...
Orthodox Jewish Bible	In the very same day was Avraham circumcised, and Yishmael bno.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	On the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son as well.
LTHB	In the same day that Abraham was circumcised, Ishmael his son also *was*.
NASB	In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son.
Syndein	In the very same day {that God commanded it} was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael his son.
A Voice in the Wilderness	In the same day Abraham was circumcised, along with his son Ishmael;...
Young's Updated LT	In this self-same day has Abraham been circumcised, and Ishmael his son;...

The gist of this verse: Abraham and Ishmael were both circumcised on this same day.

Genesis 17:26

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b^{e} (בְּ) [pronounced *b^{eh}*]	*in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿetsem (עֶצֶם) [pronounced *ģeh-TSEM*]	*bone, substance, self; self-same, corporeality, duration, existence,* and therefore *identity*	feminine singular substantive construct	Strong's #6106 BDB #782
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced *yohm*]	*day; time; today* (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûwʾ (הוּא) [pronounced *hoo*]	*that, this*	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with the definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
The bêyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean *in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day*.			
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	Niphal participle	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
ʾAb^{e}râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*]	*father of a multitude, chief of a multitude;* transliterated *Abraham*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וַ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 17:26

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yish^{e}mâʿêʾl (לִישְׁמָעֵאל) [pronounced *yish-maw-ĢALE*]	*whom God hears; God is hearing* and is transliterated *Ishmael*	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3458 BDB #1035
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: In that same day, [both] Abraham and Ishmael [lit., *Ishmael, his son*] were circumcised. It is emphasized again that, in that very same day, both Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised. The idea here is to make certain that you are not confused about Abraham's laughter. We often associate falling on the ground laughing with a derisive, insulting laugh. As if Abraham is thinking, "Yeah, like that is going to happen." However, associated with this promise is Abraham having to be circumcised and to circumcise his male family and associates. That indicates great faith. Any man willing to cut off any portion of his phallus in response to an agreement or a covenant must have a great deal of confidence that the other party is going to fulfill that agreement.

Every male in Abraham's household was circumcised, including his natural son, Ishmael (by the slave girl belonging to Sarah). It appears that Ishmael may have been a believer in Jehovah Elohim.

———————————

And all [mortal] men of his house—born [in] a house and a purchase of silver from with a son of a foreigner—they had been circumcised with him.	Genesis 17:27	**And all of the males of his compound—those born in the compound or purchased with money from foreigners—they were circumcised with him.**

Also, all of the males in Abraham's compound, including those born in the compound or purchased from foreigners, were circumcised with him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And every man of his house, the house-trained, and the purchased with money of the sons of the people, was circumcised with him.
Latin Vulgate	And all the men of his house, as well they that were born in his house, as the bought servants and strangers, were circumcised with him.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And all [mortal] men of his house—born [in] a house and a purchase of silver from with a son of a foreigner—they had been circumcised with him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And all the men of his household, both born in the house and bought with money. He also circumcised some of the strangers with him.
Septuagint (Greek)	...and all the men of his house, both those born in the house, and those bought with money of foreign nations, he circumcised them.
Significant differences:	The English translation of the targum begins with the singular form of *man*. The targum has *house-trained* rather than *house-born*. The English translation of the targum, Syriac and Greek all have *with* money rather than *of* money. The English translation of the Syriac seems to mix up the words somewhat. The Greek ends

with *he circumcised them;* rather than *they were circumcised with him*. As is very nearly always the case, although there are some fundamental differences, the narrative of the Hebrew remains unchanged, even with these differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	All the men of his household, those born in his household and those purchased with silver from foreigners, were circumcised with him.
Easy English (Pocock)	All the men in Abraham's *household received *circumcision. That included those that were born there. And it also included those that Abraham had bought from foreigners. They all received *circumcision at the same time as Abraham did.
Easy-to-Read Version	Also, on that day all the men in Abraham's house were circumcised. All the slaves born in his house and all the slaves that he had bought were circumcised.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...together with all of Abraham's slaves.
The Message	...together with all the servants of his household, those born there and those purchased from outsiders--all were circumcised with him.
New Century Version	Also on that day all the men in Abraham's camp were circumcised, including all those born in his camp and all the slaves he had bought from other nations.
New Life Bible	And all the men of his house, who were born in the house or bought with money from a stranger, had this religious act done with him.
New Living Translation	...along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants. All were circumcised with him.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...along with all the men of his house. those who were born there and the foreigners who were bought with money.
Ancient Roots Translinear	All the men of his house--born in the house, and bought with silver from the sons of foreigners-were circumcised with him.
New American Bible	...and all the males of his household, including the slaves born in his house or acquired with his money from foreigners, were circumcised with him.
NIRV	And every male in Abraham's house was circumcised along with him. That included those who were born in his house or bought from a stranger.
New Jerusalem Bible	...and all the men of his household, those born in the household and those bought from foreigners, were circumcised with him.
New Simplified Bible	Every male in Abraham's household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And all the men of his house, those whose birth had taken place in the house and those whom he had got for money from men of other lands, underwent circumcision with him.
Conservapedia	...and all the men of his houehold, both born into the household and bought with money from foreigners, were circumcised along with him.
The Expanded Bible	Also on that day all the men in Abraham's camp were circumcised, including all those born in his ·camp [^{L}house] and all ·the slaves he had bought from other nations [^{L}all those bought of a stranger].
HCSB	And all the men of his household--both slaves born in his house and those purchased with money from a foreigner--were circumcised with him.
New Advent Bible	And all the men of his house, as well they that were born in his house, as the bought servants and strangers, were circumcised with him.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	...and all the men in his household, both slaves born in his house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.
exeGeses companion Bible	...And all the men of his house - birthed in the house and the chattels of silver of the son of a stranger become circumcised with him.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...and all his household, his homeborn slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him.
Kaplan Translation	...all the men of the household, both homeborn and bought for cash from a stranger, were circumcised with him.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And all the men of his bais, born in the bais, and bought with kesef of the foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And all the men of his house, both those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised along with him.
Concordant Literal Version	And all the mortals of his household, home-born or acquired with money from a foreigner of the nations, are circumcised with him.
Context Group Version	And all the men of his house, those born in the house, and those bought with money of a foreigner, were circumcised with him.
Syndein	...And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money. . the sons of foreigners, were circumcised with him.
World English Bible	All the men of his house, those born in the house, and those bought with money of a foreigner, were circumcised with him.
Young's Literal Translation	...and all the men of his house--born in the house, and bought with money from the son of a stranger--have been circumcised with him.

The gist of this verse: All the men of Abraham's house were circumcised.

Genesis 17:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kohl*]	with a plural noun, it is rendered *all of, all; any of*	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾănâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced *uh-NAW-seem*]	*mortals, mortal men, mankind; fallen men, depraved men, feeble men [liable to disease and calamity]; peons, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble*	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
When this word is used for man, the emphasis is either a reference to man in his fallen state (the emphasis does not have to be upon sin; it can be upon man's fragility and mortal nature) or upon the lower classes of man, *the peons, peasants, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble*.			
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]	*house, residence; household, habitation* as well as *inward*	masculine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Genesis 17:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâlîyd (דִיֵלָי) [pronounced *yaw-LEED*]	*born;* possibly *son*	verbal adjective; masculine singular adjective construct	Strong's #3211 BDB #409
bayith (תַיִב) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]	*house, residence; household, habitation* as well as *inward*	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: And all of the males of his compound... A particular word is used for *men* here; those who are fallen; those who are mortal. This is important because circumcision is tied directly to regeneration. So, all of those who need regeneration are circumcised, which represents regeneration.

Genesis 17:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w^{e} (or v^{e}) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced *weh*]	*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though*	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
miq^{e}nâh (הָנְקִמ) [pronounced *mihk-NAW*]	*a purchase, a buying; a document of purchase; cost, price, a purchase-price*	feminine singular construct	Strong's #4736 BDB #889
keçeph (ףֶסֶכ) [pronounced *KEH-sef*]	*silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents*	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3701 BDB #494
min (ִמן) [pronounced *mihn*]	*from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than*	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʾêth (תֵא) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
Together, min ʾêth mean *from proximity with, from with, from close proximity to, to proceed from someone*. A good up-to-date rendering might be *directly from*. The idea is, the person that these prepositions refer to is supposed to directly be involved in the action or in whatever is being requested.			
bên (ֵבן) [pronounced *bane*]	*son, descendant*	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
nêkâr (רֵכֵנ) [pronounced *nay-KAHR*]	*foreign, that which is foreign, foreignness, alien, that which is alien; foreign gods*	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #5236 BDB #648

Translation:...—those born in the compound or purchased with money from foreigners—... This includes all males who were born on Abraham's compound (sons of slaves; possibly sons of those who worked for Abraham); and those who had been purchased as slaves from foreigners. All of those males were circumcised as well.

Genesis 17:27c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	**Common English Meanings**	**Notes/Morphology**	**BDB and Strong's Numbers**
mûwl (לוּמ) [pronounced *mool*]	*to be circumcised; to circumcise oneself*	3rd person plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]	*with, at, near, by, among, directly from*	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Translation: ...they were circumcised with him. All males of Abraham's house (i.e, his compound, as they did not all live inside the same tent), were also circumcised.

It seems as though vv. 25–27 do not seem to add much additional information, other than the fact that Ishmael was circumcised. This leads us to two questions: was Ishmael saved and why the extra couple verses? It is possible that this experience elicited such a reaction from Abraham that he just couldn't stop writing about it, even though he was repeating himself. Not much of an explanation, I realize.

Again, doing such a thing takes great faith.

All of those in Abraham's house were circumcised with him; which act is representative of all of them being saved. They were regenerated by faith in the God of Abraham; they revealed their regeneration by agreeing to this act of circumcision. No one appears to say, "Look, Abraham, we have listened to you talk to us about speaking with God, and we have let that go since you have been good to us, but this circumcision idea? This is where we draw the line." **All** the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him. This suggests that they believed Abraham when he spoke of speaking with God.

There are people who are easily confused about learning Bible doctrine. They think that, they learn a little bit and then they either imitate what they have learned or obey what it is that they have learned. So, can you imagine a pastor saying, "And if you want all the blessings of God, then you too must be circumcised!"? Well, actually some early preachers actually taught that, so let me first give you a principle from the New Testament: do not look to start changing your entire life unless it is based upon a clear mandate from God.

1Co 7:17–20 Only, everybody must continue to live in the station which the Lord assigned to him, in that in which God called him. These are my orders in all the churches. Has a man been called after he was circumcised? He must not try to change it. Has a man been called without being circumcised? He must not be circumcised. Being circumcised or not being circumcised has no value, but keeping God's commands is important. Everybody must remain in the station in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Stop letting that annoy you. Yet, if you can win your freedom, take advantage of such an opportunity. For the slave who has been called to union with the Lord is the Lord's freedman; in the same way the freeman who has been called is a slave of Christ. You have been bought and actually paid for; stop becoming slaves to men. Brothers, each one must continue close to God in the very station in which he was called. (Williams NT)

What you do not do is hear a sermon in which there are no clear mandates—or worse, read a portion of your Bible where there are no clear mandates—and then attempt to imitate what you found here. If you are reading this and you are uncircumcised, you do not go out and get circumcised. Although this happened back in the 1st century A.D., it does not happen much anymore. However, let me give you an modern-day example of someone reading something in the Bible and then imitating it: the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. In the Book of Acts, believers from the previous dispensation are given the Holy Spirit as a separate experience from their salvation (they were saved in a previous dispensation during which where they were not given the Holy Spirit).

In the Church Age, the Dispensation of the Universal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, believers from a previous dispensation were baptized by God the Holy Spirit. However, those saved during the Church Age were all given the Holy Spirit *when* they believed in Jesus Christ. For by one Spirit all of us, Jews or Greeks, slaves or freemen, have been baptized into one body, and were all imbued with one Spirit (1Cor. 12:13; Williams). *Baptized* .is in the aorist passive indicative—aorist tense is a point in time; passive voice indicates that the action of the verb was received (we did not go out and do something in order to get the Spirit); and the indicative mood is the mood of reality (this really happened). The Bible *never* mandates that a Church Age believer get baptized with the Holy Spirit (never, in any epistle, do we find the baptism of the Spirit presented in the imperative mood).

So, we do not read this passage about Abraham and decide, "You know what, I am not receiving all of God's blessings because I am not yet circumcised;" nor do we read a few chapters from the book of Acts and decide, "You know what, I am not yet receiving all of God's blessings because I have not been baptized by the Holy Ghost."

There is another misapplication associated with this passage. Do not become confused and think that, God is going to give Abraham a son because Abraham obeyed God in this instance of circumcision. God has been making these promises to Abraham for decades now. God never said, "Okay, Abe, this is your final test; pass this, and you get the son I have been promising." God has already promised Abraham the son of who would inherit all of the promises.

This circumcision was a nice touch—it represented Abraham's regeneration—that is, his spiritual birth. It is illustrated here through sexual rebirth, but the idea is, God will bring life out of death. Abraham and Sarah are sexually dead. There is nothing that they can do about that. However, with God, all things are possible, and He will bring life from death, which illustrates regeneration. God has made you alive, you who were once dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). For God has made us alive together with Christ. even while we were dead in [our] sins (Eph. 2:5a). And you, being dead in your sins and the **uncircumcision** of your flesh, God has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13–14).

Do you see how carefully the book of Genesis lays the foundation for the rest of the Bible? It is as if the Author of the book of Genesis knew what would happen in New Testament, and wrote the book of Genesis accordingly. Recall that there is no question whatsoever that the book of Genesis was written before the time of Christ. People like me believe that the book of Genesis was during the 400 years prior to the exodus, around 1900–1800 B.C. The most liberal theologians believe it to be written at least before 600 B.C. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint indicate that Genesis not only had to exist as a book before 300 B.C., but that it needed to be kept in libraries and translated into the languages of that day. My point is, Genesis, no matter how you slice it, was in existence long before Jesus walked on this earth, and yet it forms the perfect foundation for the New Testament. From Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:18–24 Luke 3:38 1Tim. 2:13) to Joseph's bones (Gen. 50:25 Heb. 11:22), Genesis in the New Testament is testified as to being accurate and literal history upon which our faith is founded.

Paul carefully taught that Abraham was justified by faith and not by this act of circumcision in Romans 4:1–25. Preceding this was Rom. 3, where Paul discusses the Jews and the Gentiles before God, and if there is any place for preeminence (boasting). Paul concludes that chapter by saying, Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the Law (Rom. 3:28). Furthermore, God is the God of Jews and Gentiles, and that both those who are circumcised and uncircumcised are justified by Him through faith in His Son (Rom. 3:28–29).

Romans 4 Interlude:

Let's take a look at Rom. 4. In Rom. 4, Paul uses Abraham as an example.

Rom. 4:1 What then shall we say that our father Abraham has discovered, according to flesh [that is, human viewpoint]?

Bear in mind to whom Paul is writing: he is writing to the church at Rome, a church that he did not found and a church he had not yet visited (Rom. 1:10–11, 15). In fact, Rome was a step beyond where Paul had gone for his 1st, 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys. It is over 1400 miles to get to Rome from Jerusalem. Paul's heart was in Jerusalem; but God wanted Paul in Rome.

Quite obviously, most of those in the local church at Rome were Gentiles (Romans and Greeks, principally), although it is reasonable, given the subject matter in this letter, that there was a substantial number of Jews who attended this congregation. There were apparently some conflicts of theology at the church of Rome. There are Jews and Gentiles there, not exactly sure how they are to intermingle in this new age. Furthermore, many of those in the church at Rome were spiritually mature believers, given the subject matter of Romans.

However, notice how Paul refers to Abraham: *our father*. We have studied Abraham's genealogy and he was a descendant of Seth (Noah's son). Most of those at Rome are descendants of Japheth and there were probably a smattering of Hamites in the congregation as well (perhaps as slaves). Probably less than 10% of the Roman congregation were descended from Abraham, yet Paul calls him, *our father*. Paul does that to get their attention. Abraham is their father, and he will explain why.

Rom. 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a [reason to] boast; but not before God.

One of the chief topics of this chapter is *justification*. *Justification* is how God qualifies man to have a relationship with God. We are born with a sin nature and we have Adam's imputed sin affixed to our permanent record, so we stand condemned from the moment of birth. Then, after birth, we all sin. With respect to God, we are in a hole, and early on, we start digging ourselves deeper into that hole. In fact, most of us dedicate our lives to digging deeper and deeper into this hole as we go through life. *Justification* means that God takes away this sin and imputes His righteousness to us (often referred to as +R) on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ. This does not mean that we begin to act righteous. It simply means that God has declared us righteous and it is based upon what Jesus did on our behalf on the cross.

It is because of justification that we can have eternal life. We are born with no relationship to God, and then we make it even worse with personal sins. God imputes His righteousness to us as a legal transaction. It is as if we have an overdrawn account and God credits $1 billion to our account.

We have studied Abraham throughout his life and, although he was a great believer, he also made a great many mistakes. Abraham could not base his salvation upon his works. He will make many mistakes in his life, yet God will continue to be faithful to him.

Paul goes to the Old Testament in order to justify what he is saying. Now, as an aside, Paul's use of the Old Testament ought to surprise you. Certainly, the Jews in the congregation believe in the Old Testament; they believe that it is the Word of God. However, most of those in the congregation are Romans. Paul does not stop and say, "Now, here is what we find in the *Jewish* Scriptures;" he simply begins quoting from the Old Testament. This is the justification for what he is saying. He goes back to the very book that we are studying, Genesis, in order to prove his point.

Rom. 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." (Gen. 15:6).

Paul is writing to a Roman congregation with a smatter of Jews in it. However, he cites the Word of God (the Old Testament) as authoritative. He does not hem and haw, and suggest, "Well, you may or may not believe in the Old Testament—I do, of course—but here is what it says." Paul quotes the Old Testament to a Roman audience (this letter to the Romans would be read aloud to the Roman church) unapologetically, as the final authority. The few Jews there accepted this authority; Paul, in this way, was establishing the Old Testament as authoritative to Church Age believers.

We have already studied this passage in Genesis. God's righteousness (+R) was credited to Abraham's account because he *had believed* (perfect tense in the Hebrew; an accomplished fact or point in time) in God. Specifically, as we have studied, Abraham believed Y^{e}howah, the God of Creation—the revealed member of the Trinity—and God credited his account with +R. Prior to his salvation, the most that Abraham could muster up would be relative righteousness (–R). That is, he could look over at Charlie Brown, and say, "Charlie Brown goes out drinking every night, chasing skirt; I am better than that." Some of the most evil people we know justify themselves and see themselves as righteous. Contemporary examples of Al Gore, Robert Kennedy Jr. and Michael Moore come to mind as those who are involved in great evil. It is highly unlikely that these men see themselves as evil or as destructive to society. Each of these 3 men likely have a very healthy dose of self-esteem and self-righteousness. *That* is –R. That is relative righteousness and self-righteousness. They think they are righteous; they think they are good; and they will let you know it.

I venture onto political blogs and discussions now and again, and when it comes to matters of morality, you have never seen anyone so self-righteous as people on the left when they are criticizing someone on the right who has committed this or that sin. These same people on the left will argue until they are blue in the face that the government should not come into their bedroom; but, when it comes to sexual transgressions by a politician on the right, they will jump all over that politician. This is relative righteousness.

Or, they may smoke marijuana and favor its legalization, but mention Rush Limbaugh, and they will talk about his addiction to painkillers two decades ago as if it were the most horrible sin in the world. Relative righteousness.

God does not look down on Abraham and think, "He is a pretty good guy; he is not out there drinking every night and chasing skirt, like that awful Charlie Brown. I kind of like Abraham for that reason." God justified Abraham (credited absolute righteousness to his account) based upon Abraham's faith in Jehovah Elohim. That very instant that Abraham, in his soul, invisible to everyone but God, expressed faith in Him, +R was transferred into Abraham's spiritual account.

We should complete Romans 4 in the next lesson and close out Gen. 17 in the lesson after that. There is one more pretty impressive thing hidden in Gen. 17.

The 4th chapter of Romans deals with Abraham and with his salvation and circumcision. One of the reasons that we do this is, so that you can see how perfect a foundation the book of Genesis is for the rest of the Bible. Abraham is mentioned by name about 250 times in the Bible. Over half of those instances occur outside of the book of Genesis. He is named in the New Testament 74 times, so we ought to know just exactly who he is and why he is so important to us as believers in the Church Age.

Rom. 4:1–3 What then shall we say that our father Abraham has discovered, according to the flesh [that is, human viewpoint]? For if Abraham was justified by works, then he has a [reason to] boast (but not before God). For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." (Gen. 15:6).

We are dealing with Abraham's circumcision. However, he was not justified by his circumcision, or by any other set of works; he was justified by his faith in Jehovah Elohim, the revealed Member of the Godhead—the person to whom Abraham spoke on several occasions.

Note again, that, for this congregation in Rome, Paul calls Abraham *our father,* even though most of the people to whom Paul is writing were not descended from Abraham. Paul will explain what it means for Abraham to be the father of the *uncircumcised* as well.

Rom. 4:4 But to the one who works [does acts of righteousness in order to impress God], the reward is not credited [to him] according to grace, but according to debt.

At birth, we start in the hole and we begin digging ourselves deeper into this hole as we get older. Let's just say, you are nice to your mother. You have no reason to boast over this. You ought to be good to your mother. You

are still in the hole and you are still digging. Let's say, you acted honorably in a business deal—again, you have no reason to boast. You ought to act honorably in your business dealings. Let's say you spent your Thanksgiving at a soup kitchen—this does not impress God. Look at all that God has given to you! That you spend a few hours serving up food for the poor, most of whom will never enjoy the material blessings that you have? That is the least you could do. You are still in the hole. In all of your supposed good works, you still have Adam's imputed sin; you still have a sin nature, and you have sinned within the past hour or so.

Certainly, you have heard of indentured servants, who come and work for Charlie Brown, and the promise is, "You work for me for a few years, and I will give you complete freedom and a nice bank account." Charley Brown charges you for your uniforms, your work clothes, your food and your shelter. So, even though you work year after year after year, and that manumission never happens. Every year, you end up owing more than you did the previous year.

In relationship to God, you are already in a hole at birth and you cannot climb out of, no matter how many good things you do. You are always working from a position of debt, and a debt which is much greater than you can ever repay. This does not mean that the system is rigged against you and there is no way out; it simply means that there is no human means of escape.

Rom. 4:5 But to him not working [for salvation], but believing on Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Just like Abraham, who did not work for his salvation; if you believe on the One Who justifies you (declares you righteous), your faith will be the basis for your righteousness. Salvation is not based upon works; it is not based upon your good deeds—you are justified by your faith in Jesus Christ.

Rom. 4:6 Even as David also says of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works,

Next, Paul goes back to the psalms of the Old Testament, and cites a principle, but not a particular psalm. The principle is, God blesses (makes happy) the person who has imputed righteousness apart from works.

Rom. 4:7–8 saying, "Blessed are those whose lawlessness deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will in no way impute sin." (Psalm 32:1–2a).

Although this psalm is peculiar to David at a particular point in his life, the principle is the same for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. Their sins are forgiven—in the Old Testament, they were covered until Jesus came and died on the cross for those sins—and, in v. 2a, David writes, Happinesses to the man to whom Y^{e}howah will in no way impute sin. Again, we are in the hole, digging ourselves in deeper and deeper, with Adam's original sin imputed to us, a sin nature which is integral to our person, and personal sins—and yet, David speaks of the Lord *not* imputing sin to us. This is *justification,* where our sins are not imputed to us, but God's righteousness is imputed to us instead.

Then Paul gets very technical.

Rom. 4:9 Is this blessedness then on the circumcision only, or on the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.

Paul asks whether this sort of blessedness of justification is for those who have been circumcised only, or can these blessings be given to the uncircumcision (that is, to gentiles)? Jews were circumcised and gentiles, for the most part, were not. The Jews of this congregation heard this question and perhaps they think to themselves, "To the circumcision only!"

Paul reminds them, Abraham's faith was credited to him for righteousness. At this point, everyone in the congregation is nodding there head. "Yeah, yeah, we got that; Abraham was justified by faith; you just said that."

Rom. 4:10 How then was it credited? Being in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Paul's logic at this point is irrefutable. Abraham was declared righteous back in Gen. 15:6 (which actually points back to a time previous to that). Yet, he is not circumcised until age 99 (Gen. 17:24). Obviously, Abraham was credited righteousness for his faith decades before he was circumcised. So Abraham was declared righteous while uncircumcised.

Rom. 4:11 And he received a sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith while still uncircumcised; so that he might be the father of all those believing through uncircumcision, for righteousness to be imputed to them also;

Circumcision was a sign—a seal of righteousness by faith—given long after Abraham had been justified. Circumcision represents regeneration; Abraham and his wife are born again. They were sexually dead, and yet, from this death will come life. That is the entire concept of regeneration, that we were dead in our trespasses and sins, and yet they were made alive through faith in Jesus Christ. Circumcision, which occurs long after God has justified Abraham (and his wife) is a sign of his regeneration, which took place decades previous.

All who believe in Jesus Christ are made righteous, whether circumcised or uncircumcised and Abraham set this pattern 2000 years prior to Paul writing these words.

Rom. 4:12 and [he is, therefore] a father of circumcision to those not of the circumcision only, but also to those walking by the steps of the faith of our father Abraham during uncircumcision.

Remember back in v. 1, where Paul said that Abraham is our father? Now he explains how Abraham is the father of the circumcision and the uncircumcision alike. Most of the people to whom Paul is writing are Romans and Greeks. They are uncircumcised gentiles. However, they are sons of Abraham, having followed him in faith. Abraham laid out the clear path to salvation—faith in Jehovah Elohim—which path we gentiles follow. The uncircumcised Abraham was justified by faith in Jehovah Elohim; and the uncircumcised gentiles hearing Paul's letter had also been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. In this way, Abraham is their father, just as he is the father of the Jewish race.

Abraham is the father of all who believe.

Furthermore, in this way, gentile believers and Jewish believers are united. Now, this may not seem like a great revelation to us today, but at that time, this was a rather radical thing for anyone to say. Paul makes this point on several occasions. For by means of one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink from one Spirit (1Cor. 12:13). There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). When it comes to being saved, there are absolutely no social, racial, gender or class distinctions. The alcoholic saved at a gospel mission in no better and no worse than the professional Christian athlete who is making millions of dollars. At the point of salvation, God has a plan for each believer, and the reward in heaven does not depend upon who they were when saved. Every person who has believed in Jesus Christ is baptized into one body and made to drink from one Spirit.

Rom. 4:13 For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Furthermore, there is an inheritance that we believers are heirs to. Abraham became an heir to the promises of God through faith in Y^{e}howah; and we become heirs to His promises through the same faith in the same God—the righteousness of faith. We are made righteous through our faith in Christ Jesus. Again, this is not some experiential righteousness but it is God's imputed righteousness. We get our bank statement in the mail and, instead of being overdrawn, we find that there is $10 billion in our account. We may not look like billionaires and we may not act like billionaires, but we are billionaires because of the balance on our account.

Rom. 4:14–15 For if they of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is made of no effect; because the Law works out wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression.

The allegation of legalistic Jews was, God justified those who kept the Law of Moses. Abraham lived about 400 years prior to the Law, so he could not keep the Law; and yet, he is proclaimed to be justified and regenerated, all on the basis of faith. Paul reasons that, if those who keep the Law are heirs to God's promises, then Abraham's faith, as testified to in the Bible, means nothing and the promises made to him by God mean nothing. If Abraham's status is based upon the Law of Moses, Abraham comes up short, because this Law did not exist for him. He would not have followed the Law because the Law did not exist for him.

The Law defines transgression; the Law does not define salvation. The Mosaic Law is associated with the wrath of God, not with the grace of God.

Rom. 4:16 Therefore it is of faith so that it might be according to grace; for the promise to be made sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Paul draws the conclusion that, the promise is made to all on the basis of faith according to grace; in this way, the promises which God clearly made to Abraham stand because of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. How is Abraham the father of us all? We have believed in Jesus Christ, the Revealed Member of the Trinity, and that is counted for righteousness. All of those who have trusted in Y^{e}howah God, Jesus Christ, are, in this faith, descendants of Abraham.

Rom. 4:17 (as it has been written, "I have made you a father of many nations") --before God, Whom he believed, who makes the dead live, and calls the things which do not exist as though they do exist.

Paul puts a new spin on the promise to Abraham, "I have made you a father of many nations." Even though Israel would come from Abraham, the first Jew, so would several arab nations. Paul applies this to refer to many gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ, as heirs of Abraham, and they will make up many nations as well.

Let's take out the parentheses, and take vv. 16–17 together:

Rom. 4:16–17 Therefore it is of faith so that it might be according to grace; for the promise to be made sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all before God, Whom he believed, Who makes the dead live, and calls the things which do not exist as though they do exist.

Abraham believed in the God Who makes that which is dead live, and brings into existence things which were not there before. *Making that which is dead live* is regeneration, again, illustrated by circumcision, where God took two sexually dead people and made then alive.

We last left Abraham in Gen. 17. God told Abraham, an adult age 99, to be circumcised. Although Abraham laughed about the idea that he and Sarah would have children, he still was strong in faith and he saw that everyone, including himself, was circumcised that very day.

So far, we have examined Paul's look back on Abraham, our father, as he doctrinally explains this to the church at Rome.

Rom. 4:1–17 What then shall we say that our father Abraham has discovered, according to the flesh [that is, human viewpoint]? For if Abraham was justified by works, then he has a [reason to] boast (but not before God). For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." (Gen. 15:6). But to the one who works [does acts of righteousness in order to impress God], the reward is not credited [to him] according to grace, but according to debt. But to him not working [for salvation], but believing on Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also says of the

blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are those whose lawlessness deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will in no way impute sin." (Psalm 32:1–2a). Is this blessedness then on the circumcision only, or on the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it credited? Being in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received a sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith while still uncircumcised; so that he might be the father of all those believing through uncircumcision, for righteousness to be imputed to them also; and [he is, therefore] a father of circumcision to those not of the circumcision only, but also to those walking by the steps of the faith of our father Abraham during uncircumcision. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is made of no effect; because the Law works out wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith so that it might be according to grace; for the promise to be made sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it has been written, "I have made you a father of many nations") --before God, Whom he believed, who makes the dead live, and calls the things which do not exist as though they do exist.

Paul first speaks of Abraham as *our father* to the church of Rome, which is mostly composed of gentiles. He makes it clear that Abraham was justified by faith in God; that righteousness was imputed to him because he exercised faith in God. It is his faith in Jehovah Elohim, the Revealed Member of the Trinity, that saves Abraham; and, in this way, he is our father.

Then Paul proves that this faith that justified Abraham justifies all of us, circumcised or uncircumcised. Paul proves this by citing Abraham as sole proof—Abraham was justified (made righteous) while he was uncircumcised. He was circumcised no less than 25 years after he was saved. So Abraham was saved in uncircumcision. Therefore, the salvation of Jesus Christ is for all people, Jews and gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised alike.

Furthermore, the Law of Moses is related to wrath, not to salvation. Salvation is a matter of faith and grace, not of holding to the Law. We are saved based upon God's grace; not because we are circumcised or keep the Mosaic Law.

Because of the example of Abraham, he is the father of us all—all who have believed—because he is our pattern.

Rom. 4:18 For he who beyond hope believed on hope for him to become the father of many nations (according to that which was spoken, "So your seed shall be").

Abraham had no reason to believe that he would become the father of many nations, except that God promised him this; therefore, he believed. God made these promises to Abraham and Abraham believed. This is a tough verse to translate. Let me suggest: Which [faith] (was) beyond expectation, [yet] he had faith in the expectation that he would become the father of many nations. Abraham was sexually dead, and yet God made promises to him about his seed (his descendants). These descendants did not exist, and yet Abraham had faith in what God told him, even though such faith went beyond expectation.

We began with Abraham's life when he was 75, and he is now 99 at the point that we are studying him in Genesis. He is married to a beautiful woman and God told him that he would be the father of many nations. However, Abraham is not the father of anyone (except for Ishmael).

Abraham's faith was certainly not perfect. Do you recall that, at one time that God came to Abraham, Abraham said, in essence, "Okay, God, what are you going to promise me this time? Oh, by the way, I don't have that son yet that You promised me from before." Yet, despite this imperfection of faith, God kept His promises to Abraham.

Rom. 4:19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body already dead (being about a hundred years old) or the deadening of Sarah's womb.

In case you did not quite get v. 18, v. 19 explains it all. Abraham was not weak in faith toward God (like all of us, on some days, his faith was weak and on others, it was strong). However, at the point in time when Abraham should have doubted God the most—when he was sexually dead and had not yet fathered a son by Sarah—he was strong in faith. He did not consider the deadness of his own body nor did he consider the deadness of Sarah's womb. These were *non-issues* to Abraham. Despite all evidence to the contrary, Abraham exercised faith in God and in His promises. This is not difficult to understand; God made us so He certainly is able to bring about anything that He promises, even if we are physically incapable of such things.

Rom. 4:20 He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God,

Abraham's faith gave glory to God. He did not stagger before the promises of God in unbelief. He did not look at that which was dead—his inability to father a child—and let that be his reality. He was strong in faith, and the result is, God is glorified. This faith that Abraham had and exhibited is divine good. Paul, 2000 years later, could point out how Abraham's faith glorified God.

As Abraham became older, his faith became stronger, and this faith glorified God. As God's promises became less possible in the human realm, Abraham's faith in God increased.

Rom. 4:21 and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform.

Paul confirms that, in the narrative we are studying, that Abraham had full confidence in God and in what God was able to do. Abraham did not have this blind faith in God. He had been *fully persuaded,* by both the actions of God and the substance of Bible doctrine, that God could do whatever He promised.

Rom. 4:22 And therefore it [his faith] was imputed to him for righteousness.

Paul brings us to another conclusion: Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, based upon all that Paul has written to this point.

Now, I want you to notice the context. Abraham exercised faith in Jehovah Elohim early on—long before circumcision—and God counted that faith to him for righteousness (a point Paul made early on in this chapter). However, we have advanced this to a point where Abraham, having been fully persuaded that God could do that which He had promised, continued to be strong in faith to God, and this was *also* imputed righteousness to Abraham. Does this mean that Abraham was saved a second time? Does this mean that he was born again, again? Not at all; this is an upgrade of righteousness that Abraham has received.

Abraham had experienced spiritual growth and therefore, exercised continued faith in God, and *that faith* was imputed to him for righteousness. This is known as experiential sanctification. In our lives, as we grow spiritually, we will continue to exercise faith in God's Word, and that faith will be to us righteousness.

Sanctification is sometimes translated *sanctification* and sometimes *holiness*. *To sanctify* means *to set something aside [for God]; to purify, to cleanse*. At salvation, we exercise faith in Jesus Christ and we are *set aside to God*. That is phrase I sanctification. However, there are points of time when a combination of faith and doctrine in our souls glorifies God in time, and that is known as phase II sanctification. Here, long after Abraham was saved, this faith was imputed to him for righteousness. Phase III sanctification is when we are removed from this life and we stand before God, cleansed of our sin nature.

There are a lot of words which get thrown around in Christian theology, so let's define this particular word, as it is a frequent theme in Scripture:

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Sanctification

1. General definition: *sanctify* means *to set apart [for God]*. *Sanctification* is both the act and the process which sets us apart to God.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Sanctification

2. Vocabulary:
   1) The Hebrew verb is qâdash (שָׁדַק) [pronounced *kaw-DASH*], which means, *to be pure, to be clean; to be holy, to be sacred; to set apart, to consecrate, to sanctify, to dedicate, to hallow*. Strong's #6942 BDB #872. This verb is found in a variety of stems, so that the meaning can vary somewhat.
   2) The Hebrew adjective/substantive is qâdôwsh (שׁוֹדָק) [pronounced *kaw-DOWSE*], which means, as an adjective, *sacred, holy, set apart, sacrosanct;* and as a noun, *saint, holy one, set-apart one, sacred one, consecrated one, one set apart to God*. Strong's #6918 BDB #872.
   3) The Greek verb is verb hagiazô (ἁγιάζω) [pronounced *hawg-ee-AD-zoh*], which means, *to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow; to separate from profane things and dedicate to God; consecrate things to God; dedicate people to God; to purify; to cleanse externally; to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin; to purify internally by renewing of the soul*. Strong's #37.
   4) The Greek noun/adjective is hagios (ἅγιος) [pronounced *HA-gee-oss*], which means *holy, set apart, dedicated to God, sacred; pure, perfect, worthy of God; consecrated*. Strong's #40.
   5) There are a number of other words related to these 4, but this should give you an idea.
3. Sanctification is a 3-step process:
   1) Salvation (phase I) sanctification; also called *positional sanctification:* we are set apart to God at salvation. We believe in Jesus Christ and God sanctifies us; we are made holy; we are set apart to God. This does not mean that there are any actual changes in our lives. A person can be saved, set apart to God, and exhibit nothing which suggests that they have changed in any way. However, such a person is set apart to God forever.
   2) Experiential (phase II) sanctification; also called *progressive sanctification:* this describes the believer in time. Ideally speaking, the believer is growing by means of Bible doctrine learned while filled with the Spirit (which means, confession of sin). When he exercises faith in Bible doctrine, his righteousness is advanced.
   3) Ultimate (phase III) sanctification: the believer is transferred from time to eternity and cleansed of his sin nature.
4. The Bible uses the vocabulary above to speak of all 3 stages of sanctification.
   1) Phase I sanctification: By this will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:10). For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified (Heb. 10:14). See also 1Cor. 1:2, 20 6:11.
   2) Phase II sanctification: As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it stands written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1Peter 1:14–16; Lev. 20:7). Jesus prayed to God the Father that we would be sanctified in Bible doctrine: Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth (John 17:17–19).
   3) Phase III sanctification: ...so that He might present it to Himself, the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and unblemished (Eph. 5:27). He [God the Father] has chosen us in Him [God the Son] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him (Eph. 1:4b). See also Col. 1:22 1Thess. 3:13 5:23 Jude 24–25.

More information on this topic may be found here:
http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=511
http://www.swordofthespiritbibleministries.com/images/simplelists//NOTESSZ/Sanctification.pdf

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Rom. 4:23 Now it was not written for him alone that it [righteousness] was imputed to him,

The fact that Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness was not something written in Scripture for just Abraham. This is written for all generations after Abraham that faith in Jesus Christ is what is necessary for God to regenerate us, to bring life where there was death, to impute righteousness where there was once only sin. When God the Holy Spirit inspires this or that to be written, there is a purpose for what is written. As John wrote in John 20:31 These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Rom. 4:24 but for us also to whom it is to be imputed, to the ones believing on Him who has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Gen. 15:6 stands written for us as well, in Paul's time, for Abraham's descendants, and for us today, that we are clear on the fact that, Abraham was saved through faith in Jesus Christ (Y^{e}howah to Abraham).

Rom. 4:25 Who was delivered because of our offenses and was raised for our justification.

Jesus Christ, Who was delivered over to the cross because of our offenses, and paid the penalty for our sins. However, we know that we have been saved by this, because God raised Him up again from the dead, for our justification.

Chapter Outline		**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**
Forward	**Doctrines Covered and Alluded to**	**Chapters of the Bible Alluded To**
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	**Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter**	**Definition of Terms**
Introduction	**Text**	**Addendum**
www.kukis.org		**Exegetical Studies in Genesis**

Addendum

Even though this is a review of Gen. 17, that does not mean that you have heard everything there is to hear about this chapter yet. In fact, there are things in this lesson that you have never heard before.

A Chiasmus (I learned this as a *chiasmos* from E.W. Bullinger[20]) is a narrative set up in a parallel and inverted structure, such that, the first sentence, passage or paragraph is parallel to the final sentence, passage or paragraph; the second matches up with the second-to-the-last; the third matches up with the third-to-the-last, etc. Often, the central portion of the chiasmos is what is the most important, and is designed to stand out.

From ***Inthebeginning.org****: In a culture wherein words, sentences, paragraphs, episodes were not separated but ran together, there was a need for literary devices to signal the beginning and end of a thought unit. Whereas in a modern literary context, such boundaries are designated by punctuation, paragraphs, chapters, subheadings, or even enumeration, the ancient literary techniques relied upon repeated key words, phrases, and ideas at the start and finish of a thought unit. Thus the fundamental function of such a framing technique was to mark the boundaries of a thought unit*.

[20] *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible;* E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 374. *Chiasmos* is the Greek form; *chiasmus* is the Latin form; the Latin form is more commonly used.

Such techniques also allowed a person to more easily recall a section of Scripture (or, whatever), because they would carry first the structure in their minds, and then fill in this structure with the text. Recall that God wanted His Word to be remembered (Deut. 6:9 11:20). Therefore, ancient students, when their kindle was on the fritz, were able to recall passages from the Word of God based upon recalling the structure of the passage.

When we represent a chiasmos, we set it up with indentations so that it appears to resemble an "X" (or a *chi* in the Greek — X).

There are keys which unlock many books and chapters and passages of the Bible. A chiasmos is one of those keys, and it organizes and often explains what a passage of Scripture is all about.

A chiasmos organizes a passage, so that there is a parallel with the beginning of the chiasmos with the end of it; the second portion of the passage finds its match in the second to the last portion of the passage; etc.

Chi [pronounced *khee*] is a letter of Greek alphabet from which this organization gets its name. The idea is, the passage can be lined up against the left side of this Greek letter: X. I realize that you think that is an "X', but is it actually a chi.

Genesis 17 as a chiasmos:

A Abram's age (1a)
  B The LORD appears to Abram—God's covenant with Abraham (1b)
    C God's first speech (1b-2)
      D Abram falls on his face (3)
        E God's second speech; (Abram's name changed, kings; 4-8)
          X God's Third Speech: the covenant of circumcision; (9-14)
        E' God's fourth speech; (Sarai's name changed, kings; 15-16)
      D' Abraham falls on his face (17-18)
    C' God's fifth speech—God's covenant with Isaac (19-21)
  B' God "goes up" from Abraham (i.e., He no longer appeared to Abraham) (22)
A' Abraham's age (24-27)

Chiasmos from **http://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/introduction/chexamples.htm** accessed February 22, 2012 and slightly modified. They also go under the happy name, ***The X-Files***.

The key that you have come across a chiasmos is not that you see the words *chiasmos ahead* written anywhere, but you notice these parallel verses, parallel thoughts, or a set of 3 or more words which match exactly 3 or more words which have come before.

I have no clue that, when Scripture was read, whether such things were noted or not by the cadence, pauses or inflection of the speaker.

What follows it the structure along with the text of Gen. 17:

A Abram's age (v. 1a): When Abram was 99 years old
  B The LORD appears to Abram (v. 1b): the LORD appeared to Abram
    C God's first speech—God's covenant with Abraham (vv. 1b-2): and He said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."
      D Abram falls on his face (v. 3): Then Abram fell on his face.
        E God's second speech; (Abram's name changed, kings; vv. 4-8): And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations. I have made you

exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

X God's Third Speech: the covenant of circumcision; (vv. 9-14): And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. 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, 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. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant."

E' God's fourth speech; (Sarai's name changed, kings; vv. 15-16): And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name." And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him."

D' Abraham falls on his face (vv. 17-18): 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?" And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!"

C' God's fifth speech—God's covenant with Isaac (vv. 19-21): God said, "On the contrary, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

B' God "goes up" from Abraham (i.e., He no longer appeared to Abraham) (v. 22): When He had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. Then 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.

A' Abraham's age (vv. 24-27): Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

What this chiasmos does is, help to organize this chapter into a unified whole. If I want to learn this chapter—even to memorize it word-by-word, I first learn the structure of the chapter, and then I fit the text into this structure. The extensive use of chiasmos and other memory aids suggests that much of the early portions of Genesis, very early on, was memorized. This does not take from their historicity; this simply means that a structure was given to various sections, to make this easier to memorize.

There is a second important aspect to a chiasmos; the chiasmos tells me what is most important in this chapter, and the central theme of this chapter is the very middle of the chiasmos (marked with a chi, X): God's mandate to Abraham to be circumcised and for all the males associated with him to be circumcised. Since I have repeated this a few dozen times, when you hear the word *circumcision,* you immediately think of Abraham being *sexually reborn* and you think of *spiritual birth*. This is the key to this chapter.

Now let's move from the center of the chiasmos (circumcision) to the E/E' tiers: what happens when you have been born? You are given a name; the person who has given you life gives you your name. Abram is reborn by God; he is spiritually born; and so, God gives him a name: *Abraham*. *Abram* was an exalted father; a *father of high and lofty things;* but now, he is *the father of a multitude;* he is the *father of many*. On the other side of this is Sarai, and for many years of their marriage, Abram called her, "My prince" and she often told him what to do. The end results were not very pretty. However, she is reborn; she is born again by God; therefore, God gives her a name: *Sarah*. She is now Abraham's *princess*.

Now, think in terms of principle, not in terms of chronology. The principle is first, there is the spiritual birth and then there is renaming of this person, which represents imputed righteousness. Because Abraham and Sarah are reborn, they become children of God with His imputed righteousness. The new names represent this new birth and the One giving them new life gave them their names.

God the Holy Spirit, inspiring the writer of these words, from the first book of the Bible, tells us all about being born again; being born from above, and that the One giving them new life—Y^{e}howah Elohim—also gives them new names. Again, this is not a call for your pastor or spiritual leader to start giving everyone in his congregation a new name. Did he regenerate you? Of course not! God had regenerated you; and God regenerated Abram and Sarai; and therefore, God is able to name them.

Quite obviously, God did not do all of this when they first believed in Him. At that point in time, Sarai was still telling father of the high and lofty what to do. They had not grown spiritually. Therefore, they were not quite ready to obey God's commands, which commands were designed to have meaning for us down until today.

Let's move out into the D/D' blocks. Abraham falls on his face. It has been 13 years since God has come to him. God even went and spoke to his mistress Hagar, but God has not spoken to him for 13 years. So, when God comes to Abraham, he prostrates himself before Him.

In the second instance that Abraham falls on his face, God reveals to him exactly what is going to happen and how the covenant (promise, contract) is going to be fulfilled. This time, Abraham is laughing, and he hides his response from God. All of a sudden, those promises from God are not for some distant time off in the nebulous future, but God puts a date to it: next year. And God tells Abraham how it will all happen. So, Abraham is laying there, face down, smiling, laughing, and asking himself, "Will Sarah bear me a child? Hasn't that train left the station already?"

We know that Sarah is an extremely beautiful woman; and we may reasonably assume that she and Abraham had relations throughout their marriage, but, nothing came of that. There were no children to be had in all their years of marriage. However, now, even though they could not bear children when they were both healthy and young, God tells Abraham that she will bear him a son, even though they are clearly past the time of fertility.

This gives us (1) the spiritual birth (represented by circumcision); (2) the new names (representing being born into a new family); and (3) the promises of God given to those who are His.

Now let's look at the C/C' block: and He said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." God comes back to Abraham after 13 years and he tells Abraham to walk before God and to be spiritually mature. Part of that spiritual maturity is to listen to God and to obey Him. Now Abraham expresses some doubt about Sarah bearing him a child, and God says, "On the contrary, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac. And I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." In both paragraphs, God speaks of His covenant, first with Abraham and then with a yet unborn and not-yet-conceived Isaac. God promises to multiply Abraham greatly and He promises for His covenant with Isaac to be eternal.

In other words, (4) Spiritual maturity means that God's promises are imminent. You will also notice that God has answered prayer, which becomes a greater factor in the life of someone who is spiritually mature.

The B/B' block: ...the LORD appeared to Abram...[and] When He had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. Then 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.

God had to wait for awhile. Abraham had to find out that his own works of the flesh, his own human good, was not the way to go. Listening to his wife and obeying her; not the way to go. Having a child by a mistress; not the way to go. So, after 13 years, where there were no doubt some conflicts and difficulties that arose because of what Abraham chose to do, now Abraham is ready and willing to do things God's way, exactly God's way. So Abraham, despite his falling down and laughing, that very day, circumcises all the males of his household.

And, finally, the A/A' block: When Abram was 99 years old...Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Abraham is 99 years old when God appears to him and he obeys God right there and then, when he is 99 years old. Abraham is now ready to move forward spiritually; he is ready to get a down payment toward God's promises to him. In one year, Abraham would be blessed with a son, his first and only son by Sarah, when he is 100 years old.

Or, more briefly (taking the A and B blocks together), (5) Occupation with the Person of Christ resulting in obedience to the mandates of God.

Now let's put all of these together: (1) the spiritual birth (represented by circumcision); (2) the new names (representing new life and entering into a new family); (3) the promises of God given to those who are His; (4) Spiritual maturity means that God's promises are imminent; and (5) Occupation with the Person of Christ resulting in obedience to the mandates of God, which will eventually result in fulfillment of God's promises. .

In case you did not get this, we began in the middle of the chiasmos and worked our way to the outside, and this gives us the logical order of our spiritual lives.

One more thing about how amazing the Word of God is. This chapter has been around for about 4000 years. Millions upon millions of people have studied it. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that you have heard this chiasmos taught in this particular order, going from the center to the outer blocks, resulting in an outline of the spiritual life. Nothing here was new about the spiritual life; but it was just hidden here within this chiasmos waiting to be unearthed. The Bible is like that. God's wisdom is great and He wants His Word to be examined thoroughly.

To me, the chiasmos is one of the fascinating things in the Word of God. I believe that these historical narratives were repeated for several generations, passed along to many people. Furthermore, we are going to find that the knowledge of God, at this time, was not confined merely to Abraham, but that it existed in many places in the Land of Promise. We have already seen Melchizedek, to whom Abraham paid tithes and to whom Abraham gave respect. But this truth of God's Word and Who and What God is could be found all over the world, sometimes simply remembered by means of a chiasmos.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

This summarizes many of the doctrines and related thoughts found in this chapter.

What We Learn from Genesis 17

1. Believers in the time of Abraham and before had a spiritual life; and this was reasonably well-defined.
2. God put Abram on the shelf for 13 years, as Abram deviated from God's plan without checking with God first. This parallels God setting aside the Jews as a people when they reject His plan as well.
3. Based upon the clues from this and other chapters, it becomes apparent that Hagar has been the one to raise Ishmael, with participation from Abram.
4. By introducing Himself as God the Almighty, God is telling Abram and Sarai that He can accomplish anything that He wants to accomplish.
5. We find out in this chapter that there is some sort of specific spiritual life that the believer ought to be leading, described by the word *walking*.
6. God promised to make Abraham great, and he is better known throughout the world today than any king from that era.
7. Despite the fact that God did not direct Abraham to use Hagar as a surrogate wife; God still respected her son that Abraham sired. God protected them and saw to their future based upon blessing by association and upon the fact that Hagar is a believer in Him.
8. God does not call upon us to change our names to a more holy name.
9. If there is a common practice at your church, but there is no imperative sentence telling you to do that thing, then you need to rethink that church.
10. We spent some time discussing Hebrew verbs, their tenses, and how we typically translate them. We also learned how the perfect tense is natural to use with God, as God exists outside of time; but that the imperfect tense is ideal to use when the action is future in the life of the subject of the verb.
11. We studied the Suzerain Vassal Treaty.
12. God will never abandon Israel.
13. We viewed a map of the land which God has given to Israel.
14. We saw an example of having vowel points and how this did not change the Word of God as it had been originally recorded.
15. We have a great many ancient manuscripts which testify to the accuracy of the Bible text.
16. We learn the true meaning and purpose of circumcision in this chapter.
17. God promises us and the Jews that He will give us a new heart. We find out in this chapter exactly what that means.
18. There was a difference in the nature of Adam and the woman's sins. The woman was deceived when she sinned; Adam sinned fully knowing what he was doing. For this reason, the sin nature is always passed down from Adam to the males; the woman does not pass along the sin nature. She is a carrier; but she does not pass along the sin nature. This is why the virgin birth is a part of Christian doctrine.
19. The faith of the Jews was evangelistic; God required them to spread the knowledge and worship of Him.
20. We studied slavery and that there are legitimate forms of slavery and illegitimate forms (we practiced an illegitimate form of slavery in the United States). Slavery is rarely properly presented in our schools.
21. Even though the Bible recognized slavery as legitimate, it also gave slaves various rights and privileges; and slaves were to be exposed to the gospel of the Revealed God.
22. God renamed a few people in the Bible; we find out in this chapter *why* God did this and what meaning we are to take away from this.
23. There are many ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament in a variety of languages; we study these in this chapter.
24. We learn the 4 possible responses to prayer; and see how that plays out regarding Abraham's prayer about Ishmael.
25. In God's plan, there is a right time and a wrong time. During the first 13 years of Ishmael's life, it was the wrong time to bring another child—the child of promise—onto the scene.
26. We studied the speech of Saint Stephen and how this speech related to Abraham in this chapter.
27. We studied Rom. 4 as it relates to this chapter of Genesis.
28. There is a close relationship between evil, self-righteousness, and self-esteem. We have contemporary examples.
29. We fully examined the doctrine of Sanctification in this chapter.

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

CHAPTER 10.

HOW ABRAM FOUGHT WITH THE ASSYRIANS, AND OVERCAME THEM, AND SAVED THE SODOMITE PRISONERS, AND TOOK FROM THE ASSYRIANS THE PREY THEY HAD GOTTEN.

5. The forementioned son was born to Abram when he was eighty-six years old: but when he was ninety-nine, God appeared to him, and promised him that he Should have a son by Sarai, and commanded that his name should be Isaac; and showed him, that from this son should spring great nations and kings, and that they should obtain all the land of Canaan by war, from Sidon to Egypt. But he charged him, in order to keep his posterity unmixed with others, that they should be circumcised in the flesh of their foreskin, and that this should be done on the eighth day after they were born: the reason of which circumcision I will explain in another place. And Abram inquiring also concerning Ismael, whether he should live or not, God signified to him that he should live to be very old, and should be the father of great nations. Abram therefore gave thanks to God for these blessings; and then he, and all his family, and his son Ismael, were circumcised immediately; the son being that day thirteen years of age, and he ninety-nine.

CHAPTER 12.

CONCERNING ABIMELECH; AND CONCERNING ISMAEL THE SON OF ABRAHAM; AND CONCERNING THE ARABIANS, WHO WERE HIS POSTERITY.

1. ABRAHAM now removed to Gerar of Palestine, leading Sarah along with him, under the notion of his sister, using the like dissimulation that he had used before, and this out of fear: for he was afraid of Abimelech, the king of that country, who did also himself fall in love with Sarah, and was disposed to corrupt her; but he was restrained from satisfying his lust by a dangerous distemper which befell him from God. Now when his physicians despaired of curing him, he fell asleep, and saw a dream, warning him not to abuse the stranger's wife; and when he recovered, he told his friends that God had inflicted that disease upon him, by way of punishment, for his injury to the stranger; and in order to preserve the chastity of his wife, for that she did not accompany him as his sister, but as his legitimate wife; and that God had promised to be gracious to him for the time to come, if this person be once secure of his wife's chastity. When he had said this, by the advice of his friends, he sent for Abraham, and bid him not to be concerned about his wife, or fear the corruption of her chastity; for that God took care of him, and that it was by his providence that he received his wife again, without her suffering any abuse. And he appealed to God, and to his wife's conscience; and said that he had not any inclination at first to enjoy her, if he had known she was his wife; but since, said he, thou leddest her about as thy sister, I was guilty of no offense. He also entreated him to be at peace with him, and to make God propitious to him; and that if he thought fit to continue with him, he should have what he wanted in abundance; but that if he designed to go away, he should be honorably conducted, and have whatsoever supply he wanted when he came thither. Upon his saying this, Abraham told him that his pretense of kindred to his wife was no lie, because she was his brother's daughter; and that he did not think himself safe in his travels abroad, without this sort of dissimulation; and that he was not the cause of his distemper, but was only solicitous for his own safety: he said also, that he was ready to stay with him. Whereupon Abimelech assigned him land and money; and they coventanted to live together without guile, and took an oath at a certain well called Beersheba, which may be interpreted, The Well of the Oath: and so it is named by the people of the country unto this day.

2. Now in a little time Abraham had a son by Sarah, as God had foretold to him, whom he named Isaac, which signifies Laughter. And indeed they so called him, because Sarah laughed when God (25) said that she should bear a son, she not expecting such a thing, as being past the age of child-bearing, for she was ninety years old,

Josephus' History of this Time Period

and Abraham a hundred; so that this son was born to them both in the last year of each of those decimal numbers. And they circumcised him upon the eighth day and from that time the Jews continue the custom of circumcising their sons within that number of days. But as for the Arabians, they circumcise after the thirteenth year, because Ismael, the founder of their nation, who was born to Abraham of the concubine, was circumcised at that age; concerning whom I will presently give a particular account, with great exactness.

3. As for Sarah, she at first loved Ismael, who was born of her own handmaid Hagar, with an affection not inferior to that of her own son, for he was brought up in order to succeed in the government; but when she herself had borne Isaac, she was not willing that Ismael should be brought up with him, as being too old for him, and able to do him injuries when their father should be dead; she therefore persuaded Abraham to send him and his mother to some distant country. Now, at the first, he did not agree to what Sarah was so zealous for, and thought it an instance of the greatest barbarity, to send away a young child (26) and a woman unprovided of necessaries; but at length he agreed to it, because God was pleased with what Sarah had determined: so he delivered Ismael to his mother, as not yet able to go by himself; and commanded her to take a bottle of water, and a loaf of bread, and so to depart, and to take Necessity for her guide. But as soon as her necessary provisions failed, she found herself in an evil case; and when the water was almost spent, she laid the young child, who was ready to expire, under a fig-tree, and went on further, that so he might die while she was absent. But a Divine Angel came to her, and told her of a fountain hard by, and bid her take care, and bring up the child, because she should be very happy by the preservation of Ismael. She then took courage, upon the prospect of what was promised her, and, meeting with some shepherds, by their care she got clear of the distresses she had been in.

4. When the lad was grown up, he married a wife, by birth an Egyptian, from whence the mother was herself derived originally. Of this wife were born to Ismael twelve sons; Nabaioth, Kedar, Abdeel, Mabsam, Idumas, Masmaos, Masaos, Chodad, Theman, Jetur, Naphesus, Cadmas. These inhabited all the country from Euphrates to the Red Sea, and called it Nabatene. They are an Arabian nation, and name their tribes from these, both because of their own virtue, and because of the dignity of Abraham their father.

From: **http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm** accessed December 3, 2013. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews;* Book 1, Chapters 10, 12. The history of this exact chapter is quite thin, so there is an excess of information found in addition to Gen. 17.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called The Bible History, Old Testament, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant.

This comes from Chapter 13, entitled *The Twofold Promise of "a Seed" to Abraham - Ishmael - Jehovah visits Abraham (GENESIS 15-20)*.

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 17

Hagar had returned to Abram's house, and given birth to Ishmael. And now ensued a period which we must regard as of most sore trial to Abram's faith. Full thirteen years elapsed without apparently any revelation on the part of God. During this time Ishmael had grown up, and Abram may almost insensibly have accustomed himself to look upon him as the heir, even though in all probability he knew that he had not been destined for it. Abram was now ninety - nine years old, and Sarai stricken in years. For every human hope and prospect must be swept away, and the heir be, in the fullest sense, the child of the promise, that so faith might receive directly from God that for which it had waited. It was in these circumstances that Jehovah at last once more appeared in visible form to Abram, - this time to establish and fulfill the covenant which He had formerly made[The

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 17

expression "I will make My covenant" (Genesis 17:2) is quite different from that rendered by the same words in Genesis 15:18. In the latter case it is "to make" - literally , to "cut a covenant;" while the terms in Genesis 17:2 are, "I will give My covenant," i.e., establish, fulfill it.]. Hence also now the admonition: "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect," which follows but can never precede the covenant. In token of this established covenant, God enjoined upon Abram and his descendants the rite of circumcision as a sign and a seal; at the same time changing the name of Abram, "father of elevation" (noble chief?), into Abraham, "the father of a multitude," and that of Sarai, "the princely," into Sarah, or "the princess," [Others have derived the name Sarah from a root, meaning "to be fruitful.] to denote that through these two the promise was to be fulfilled, and that from them the chosen race was to spring. These tidings came upon Abraham with such joyous surprise that, as in humble worship, he "fell upon his face," he "laughed," as he considered within himself the circumstances of the case, - as Calvin remarks, not from doubt or disbelief, but in gladness and wonder.

To perpetuate the remembrance of the wonder, the promised seed was to bear the name of Isaac, or "laughter." Thus, as afterwards, at the outset of the calling of the Gentiles, the name of Saul was changed into Paul - probably after the first - fruits of his ministry, - so here, at the outset of Israel's calling, we have three new names, indicative of the power of God, which lay at the root of all, and of the simple faith which received the promise. The heir of the promises was indeed to be the child of Sarah; but over Ishmael also would the Lord watch, and "multiply him exceedingly," and "make him a great nation." Ever since those days has the sign of circumcision remained to bear testimony to the covenant with Abraham. On the eighth day, as the first full period of seven has elapsed, a new period is, as it were, to begin; and each Jewish child so circumcised is a living witness to the transaction between God and Abraham more than three thousand years ago. But, better far, it pointed forward to the fulfillment of the covenant - promise in Christ Jesus, in whom there is now no other circumcision needed than that of the heart.

From **http://www.levendwater.org/books/v1bhot.pdf** accessed December 3, 2013.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

The Holman Christian Standard Bible is the translation used.

Genesis 17 and the Suzerain Vassal Treaty

Scripture	The Suzerain Vassal Treaty
When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty." (Gen. 17:1a)	1) The identification of the Suzerain by his name and titles
Then Abram fell to the ground (Gen. 17:3a). By this, Abram recognizes the historical nature of his relationship with the LORD.	2) The historical survey of the Suzerain's dealings with the vassal. The purpose is to illustrate to the vassal how much the Suzerain has done to protect and establish the vassal who therefore owes submission and allegiance to the Suzerain

Genesis 17 and the Suzerain Vassal Treaty

Scripture	The Suzerain Vassal Treaty
"Live in My presence and be devout." God also said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations are to keep My covenant. This is My covenant, which you are to keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every one of your males must be circumcised. You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and you. Throughout your generations, every male among you at eight days old is to be circumcised. This includes a slave born in your house and one purchased with money from any foreigner. The one who is not your offspring, a slave born in your house, as well as one purchased with money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant. If any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah will be her name." (Gen. 17:1b, 9–15)	3) The next section of these treaties list the "stipulations," what the vassal is required to do and what the lord offers in return.
"I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell to the ground, and God spoke with him: "As for Me, My covenant is with you, and you will become the father of many nations. Your name will no longer be Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations. I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you. I will keep My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. And to you and your offspring after you I will give the land where you are residing--all the land of Canaan--as an eternal possession, and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:2–8)	4) Blessings and Sanctions - This spells out the benefits for those who keep the treaty, and punishments for those who do not keep the treaty. Ancient Near Eastern kings usually evicted and exiled treaty breakers.
Although this is not spelled out, it is obvious that God expected Abraham to remember these promises. His falling on his face before God indicated that these promises were in his soul.	5) There may be a requirement that the vassal deposit his copy of the treaty in his temple, where he is to occasionally read and study it to refresh his memory concerning his duties.
"But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year." (Gen 17:21) We also have witnesses to the treaty back in Gen. 15:17 When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the divided animals.	6) Witnesses to the treaty.

Genesis 17 and the Suzerain Vassal Treaty

Scripture	The Suzerain Vassal Treaty
God knew that Abraham would fulfill the conditions required of him. Therefore, God did not have this section in any of the covenants that He made with Abraham. However, Israel, as a nation, was a different story. See Deut. 28.	7) The last section of these treaties contains the blessings (if the vassal obeys) and curses (if the vassal is unfaithful) of the Suzerain.

It is claimed by many that the entire book of Deuteronomy is based up the Suzerain Vassal Treaty. Whether or not that is the intention of Moses is another thing.

A portion of this was taken from:
http://guardianguideandstay.blogspot.com/2012/02/covenants-suzerain-vassal-land-grants.html
http://www.newlife-pca.com/files/womensbiblestudy/12P123JJ_What_Is_A_Covenant.pdf

Chapter Outline Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Genesis 17

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
God appears to Abram 13 years later	
When Abram was 99 years old, Y^{e}howah appeared to him [lit., *Abram*] and He said to him, "I [am] God Omnipotent! Walk before Me and be complete [spiritually mature]; and I will grant My contract between Me and you. Furthermore, I will greatly multiply [your descendants]."	When Abram was 99 years old, Jehovah appeared to him and said, "I am God Omnipotent. Walk before Me and be spiritually mature; and I will establish My covenant between Me and you. Furthermore, I will greatly multiply your descendants."
God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham	
Abram then fell upon his face; and God spoke to him, saying, "[It is] I; listen, My contract [is] with you and you will be a father of many [gentile] nations. No longer is your name called Abram; but [lit., *and*] Abraham has become your name, for I have made you a father of many nations. And I have caused you to be exceedingly fruitful—extremely [fruitful]—and I have made [transformed] you into nations and kings will come from you.	Abram then fell on his face; and God spoke to him, saying, "Listen to Me! My agreement is with you; you already have become a father of many gentile nations. No longer will your name be Abram, but Abraham is now your name, for I have made you the father of many nations. And I have already caused you to become extremely, exceedingly fruitful, and I have transformed you into nations, and kings will come out of you.
Therefore [lit., *and*], I will establish My contract between Me and you, and [between Me] and your descendants after you, for an everlasting contract for their generations, to be Elohim to you and to your descendants after you.	Therefore, I will establish My agreement between Me and you, as well as between Me and your descendants who live after you, which covenant will be an everlasting agreement for their generations, that I will be your God and I will be God to your descendants who live after you.

A Complete Translation of Genesis 17

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Furthermore, I have given to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your [present] residence—all the land of Canaan—for a permanent possession. And I will be Elohim to them."	Furthermore, I have given both to your and to your descendants after you the land where you presently reside—in fact, all the land of Canaan—and it will be your permanent possession. And I will be the God of your descendants."
Circumcision is the sign of the divine covenant	
And Elohim said to Abraham, "You will keep My contract—you and your descendants after you for generations. This [is] My contract which you [all] will keep; [this contract is] between Me and you all and between [Me and] your seed: [There will be] circumcision for all of you—[for] every male. And you all will be circumcised [in] the flesh of your foreskins and [this] will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you [all].	And God said to Abraham, "You will keep My agreement—you and your descendants in perpetuity. This is My agreement, which all of you will keep; this is an agreement between Me and all of you; and between Me and your seed: All of you—every male—will be circumcised. And you will all be circumcised, cutting away the flesh of your foreskins; and this ritual will be the sign of a covenant between Me and all of you.
And an eight-day-old son will be circumcised with regards to you [all]: [including] every male belonging to your race [lit., *your generations*], he [who is] born [in your] house and [even] [one] purchased with your money from the son of a foreigner not from your descendants. The one born in your home or purchased with your money will definitely be circumcised. Therefore, My covenant concerning your flesh stands [lit., *is*] [as] a perpetual covenant.	All eight-day-old male children will be circumcised because of you. This is every male from your race, born in your house, and sons of foreigners not from your descendants. The one born in your home or purchased with your money will be, without exception, circumcised. Therefore, My covenant with your flesh stands as a perpetual covenant.
When [there is] a foreskinned male who has not circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, then that soul will be cut off from his people [lit., *her peoples*]. He has broken My covenant."	When an uncircumcised male has not circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, then his soul will be cut off from his people because He has broken My covenant."
God renames Sarai	
Then Elohim said unto Abraham, "Sarai, your wife—you will no longer call her name Sarai; because Sarah [is] her name. And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed her [*him;* according to the Greek, Syriac and targum], then she [*he;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum] has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from her [*him;* according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum]."	Then God said to Abraham, "You will no longer call your wife Sarai; because now, Sarah is her name. And I have blessed her; furthermore, I will give you a son from her. And when I have blessed him, then he will become nations—kings of peoples will come from him."
Abraham falls on his face a second time and then asks that his son Ishmael fulfill God's covenant	
Then Abraham fell on his face and he laughed. Then he said to his heart, "Will [a child] be born to [one who is] 100 years old? And behold Sarah—will a 90-year-old woman give birth?"	Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed. Then he said to himself, "Will a child be born to someone who is 100-years-old? And consider Sarah—will this 90-year-old woman give birth?"

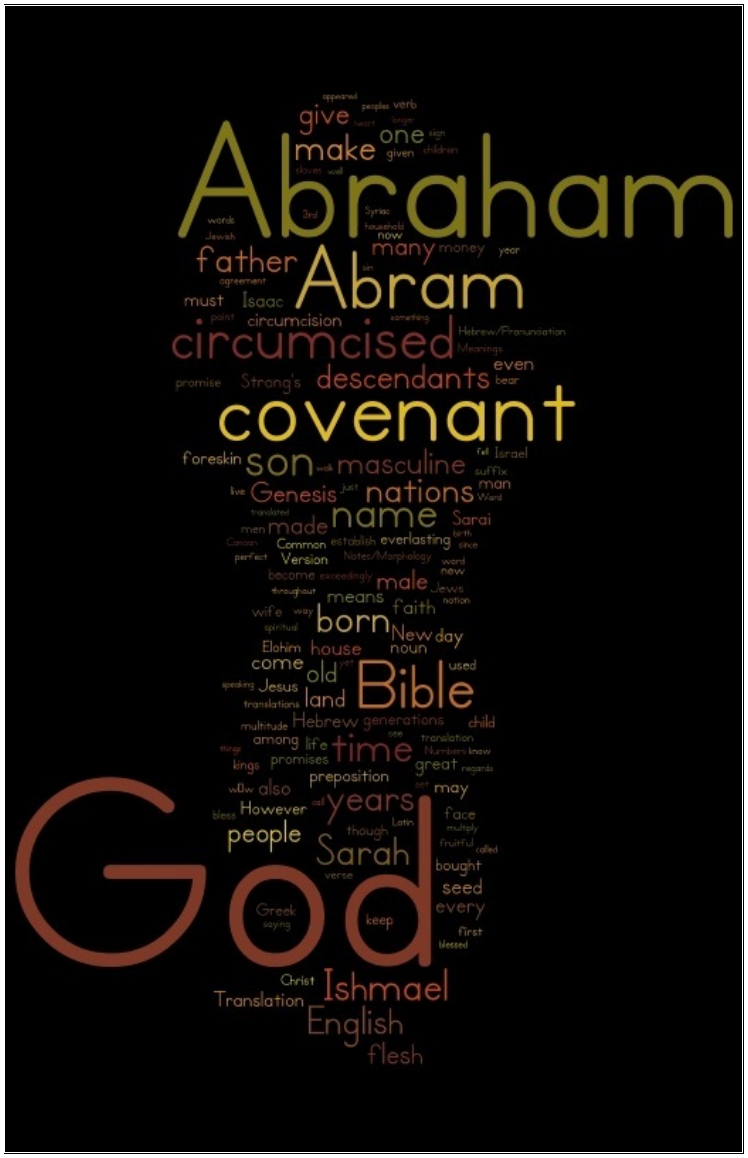
A Complete Translation of Genesis 17	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	**A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase**
Then Abraham said unto the Elohim, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You.”	Then Abraham said to God, “Oh that my son Ishmael might live before You.”
God will bless Ishmael	
But [lit., *and so*] Elohim said, “On the contrary, Sarah, your wife, will bear a son to you and you will call his name Isaac. Furthermore [lit., *and so*], I have established My covenant with him for a perpetual covenant for his descendants after him.	But Elohim said, “On the contrary—your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac. Furthermore, I have established my covenant as an everlasting covenant, both with him and his descendants after him.
Concerning Ishmael, I have heard you. Listen, I have blessed him and I have made him fruitful and I will greatly, exceedingly multiply him. He will sire 12 princes and I have given a great people to him.	Concerning Ishmael, I have heard your request. Listen carefully: I have already blessed Ishmael and I have made him vigorous and I will greatly multiply his descendants. He himself will sire 12 princes alone and I have will make him into a great people.
However, I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you this set time in the following year.” Because he came to the end of speaking with him, Elohim ascended from over Abraham.	However, I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will give birth to for you at this time next year.” Because he had finished speaking with him, God went up from over Abraham.
All males in Abraham’s camp were circumcised	
Therefore, Abraham takes Ishmael, his son, all [those] born [in] his house, and all those purchased [with] his silver—every male among the mortals [in] Abraham’s compound [lit., *house*]; and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins in the very same day just as Elohim spoke with him.	Then Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all those born in his compound along with all those he purchased with money—every male, in fact, within Abraham’s compound; and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on the very day that Elohim spoke with him doing what God had commanded.
And Abraham [was] 99-years-old when he was circumcised [in] the flesh of his foreskin. His son, Ishmael, [was] 13-years-old when he was circumcised [in] the flesh of his foreskin. In that same day, [both] Abraham and Ishmael [lit., *Ishmael, his son*] were circumcised.	And Abraham was 99-years-old when he was circumcised in the flesh of this foreskin. His son, Ishmael, was 13-years-old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. Both Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised on that very same day.
And all of the males of his compound—those born in the compound or purchased with money from foreigners—they were circumcised with him.	Also, all of the males in Abraham’s compound, including those born in the compound or purchased from foreigners, were circumcised with him.

Chapter Outline **Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Genesis 17

Word Cloud from Exegesis of Genesis 17[21]



These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Genesis 17 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

Chapter Outline		Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines
Forward	Doctrines Covered and Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded To
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Definition of Terms
Introduction	Text	Addendum
www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in Genesis

[21] Some words have been left out of this graphic; including *Strong, BDB,* and *pronounced*.