

Genesis 17

Verses 1-2

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, **the Lord** appeared to Abram and said to him,

“I am **God Almighty**;

Walk before Me, and be blameless.

² I will make My covenant between Me and you,
And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old

He was 86 years old in the previous verse

The Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty;

It would be interesting to know in what form the Lord appeared

The word “God Almighty” is from the Hebrew EI-Shaddai

EI-Shaddai means the Powerful God

The deadness of Abraham’s body and Sara’s womb will not hinder EI-Shaddai

Walk before Me, and be blameless.

See Matthew 5:48

No man even comes close to this standard, but we must all try

² **I will make My covenant between Me and you,
And I will multiply you exceedingly.”**

God has promised this a number of times to Abram

But Abram is now 99 and the promise to him seems rather unlikely

Verses 3-5

³ **Abram fell on his face, and **God** talked with him, saying,**

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

⁵ **No longer shall you be named Abram,
But your name shall be Abraham;
For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.**

And Abram fell on his face

Most likely this was his response to God appearing to him

This is assuming that God appeared in a form that was glorious

In Genesis 18 the Lord appeared to him as one of three men

Maybe the command for Abraham to be perfect overwhelmed him

And God talked with him

Here the word for God is Elohim

In the space of 3 verses we have 3 names for God, Jehovah, El-Shaddai, and Elohim

As for me

God states his part of the covenant first

In verse 9, God will state Israel's part when he says as for thee

Your name shall be Abraham

Why the change in his name?

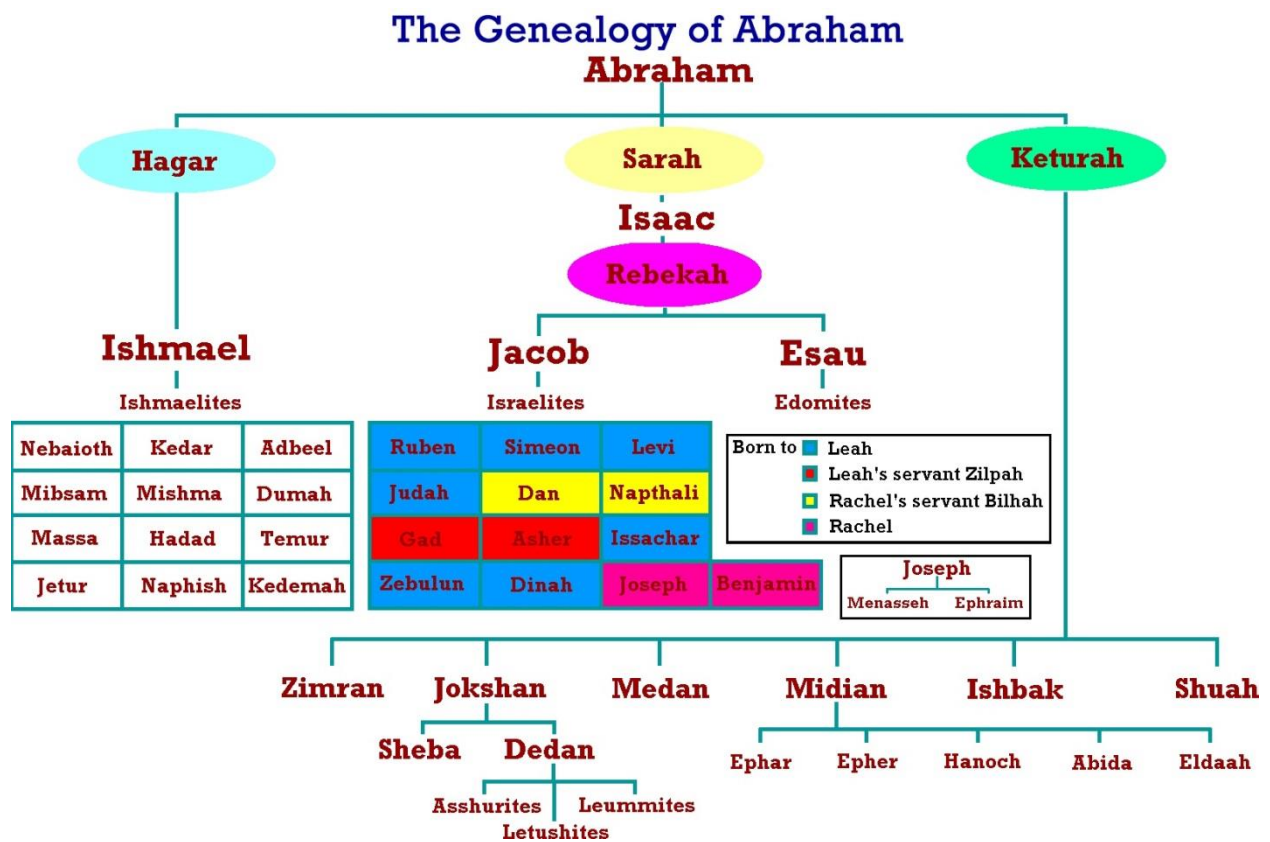
In this case it reflected his new status as a father of many nations

This also happened with his grandson Jacob

After Jacob wrestled with the angel, he demanded a blessing from the Lord
 The angel gave him a blessing and a new name
Isra-El, which means he who prevails with God

For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

See Pic 1705



Abraham was the “father” of the Israelites, Edomite’s, Midianites and Arabs

Midian became the father of the Midianites

He was born to Abraham and **Keturah**

Genesis 25:1–2

Esau became the father of the Edomite's

Isaac had twin boys, Esau and Jacob

See Genesis 25:19

The Arabs are descendants of Abraham through Ishmael and Hagar.

See Pic 1710



Verses 6-10

⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land where you live as a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” ⁹ God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.

Verse 6

And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you

All of this came true as the history of the Jewish nation unfolded

Verse 7

I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant.

What covenant will God establish?

God is referring to the covenant of circumcision in verse 10

It takes two parties to make a covenant

In this case it was between God and Israel (Abraham and his descendants)

So let's look at what was required of both parties

Verse 8

⁸ And I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land where you live as a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God

This part was God's responsibility and he made two promises

1. Israel would receive all the land of Canaan
2. He would be their God

Verse 9 and 10

⁹ God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.

This part was the responsibility of Israel

Every male was to be circumcised.

And this command was followed closely with only a few exceptions that we know of

1. Moses neglected this command for a period of time.

See Exodus 4:24-26

2. And those born in the wilderness were not circumcised in a timely fashion

See Joshua 5:2-9

There is one other issue that needs to be addressed here

God said the land of Canaan would be an everlasting possession

So why did Israel lose their land?

Because God made additional covenants with Israel as time passed

See Deuteronomy 29:1

God gave an additional covenant to them at Horeb in 1446 BC

And again when they were at Moab just before they entered Canaan

This was about 40 years later in 1406 BC

These additional covenants demanded faithfulness to God

See Deut. 30:15-20

But Israel as a nation was not faithful to God during most of their history

This led to the Babylonian captivity in 586 BC

For the next 70 years, they lived in Babylon while foreigners lived in Israel

This was a sign and a warning of what was to come

Six hundred years later Israel rejected the Messiah

And their covenant with God was nullified because of this final act of rebellion

The land of Canaan no longer belonged to the Jews

And this has been verified by the many years of history since that time

Verses 11-14

¹¹ And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹² And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, *including* a slave who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. ¹³ A slave who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall certainly be circumcised; so My covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ But as for an uncircumcised male, one who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between a Jew and his God

And 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."

If a Jew was not circumcised, then he was excluded from the covenant

Rabbi Menachem, in his commentary on the Book of Moses says

Our Rabbis have said, No circumcised person will see hell

The Jews regarded circumcision as in some way securing their salvation

They should have realized that a relationship with God involved more than that

Verse 15-16

¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her *by* the name Sarai, but Sarah *shall be her name*. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a *mother of nations*; kings of peoples will come from her.”

Sarah *shall be her name*

Both Abram and Sarai received a new name

¹⁶ I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her

This is the promise God had given him 13 years ago

And she shall be a *mother of nations*; kings of peoples will come from her

Israel and the Edom were two nations that came from her

Verses 17-19

¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man a hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth *to a child*?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!” ¹⁹ But God said, “No, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart

Abraham's laugh seems to be one of unbelief

This is backed up by 3 statements of Abraham

Shall a child be born to a 100 year old man?

Shall a woman 90 years old bear a child?

I'll settle for Ishmael being the heir

But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time in the next year

Isaac was the son of a promise and this son received the covenant

Abraham tried to help God in this matter, but his help was not needed

Abraham had waited a long time for this promise to come true

But God fulfills his promises according to his time

Faith in God's promises often requires waiting

Waiting to the point that seems unreasonable by human standards

Verse 22-23

²² When He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. ²³ Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all *the slaves* who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on this very same day, as God had said to him.

And he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the same day

Abraham obeyed God immediately and completely

There were no shortcuts or exemptions

He did all that God had commanded him

Verses 24-27

²⁴ Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ On this very same day Abraham was circumcised, as well as his son Ishmael. ²⁷ And all the men of his household, those who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised

Arabs, as descendants of Abraham, observe the rite of circumcision

But their male children are not circumcised on the eighth day like the Jews

Instead when they are thirteen years old as Ishmael was here

And all the men of his household, those who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Repetition is often used in scripture to emphasis the importance of an event