

Genesis Chapters 17 through 18:1-15

Covenant with Abram's Descendants Through Isaac

Names

God, = Elohim, elohim = divinity, literally “God” “god” or “gods”

LORD = Yahweh – later written YHWH, and pronounced JeHoVaH. This name was first revealed to Moses, who wrote Genesis and used it throughout to refer to God. Exodus 3:13-14, John 8:57-59

LORD OR LORD = Adonai or adonai = literally “lord” as in master or ruler. Can refer to God, men or angels

GOD ALMIGHTY = El Shaddai = “God from on high,” “the One belonging to the mountain.” Used 48 times in the Old Testament. First used in Genesis Chapter 17 and elsewhere in Genesis in connection with the promise of posterity.

Abram = [son of] exalted father (Terah)

Sarai = unknown, came to mean contentious

Ishmael = God hears

Abraham = Father of many

Sarah = Lady or princess

Isaac = He laughs

Conditional Covenant with Abraham's descendants.

Genesis 17:1-2 “walk before me and be blameless”

Genesis 17:3-8 “As for Me”

Twice before (Genesis 12 & 15) God mentions His covenant (or contract). Here however God reveals additional aspects of His covenantal promises. What are they?

Genesis 17:9-15 “As for you”

Circumcision signified Abraham's commitment, that the Lord alone would be his God, he was “cut off” from all other gods, and was a symbol of separation and purity.

It was a self-maledictory oath (like the oath God had made in Chapter 15): “If I am not loyal in faith and obedience to the Lord, may the sword of the Lord cut off me and my offspring.”

The physical sign of connection to Abraham was meant to remind Abraham's offspring to be spiritually circumcised as well, through faith and commitment to the Lord. Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 2:25

Because it was a sign connected to the promise to the offspring, as the Hebrew people faced calamity, they abided by the requirement of circumcision and were reminded of God's promise to them.

What outward “once and for all” sign of commitment in the new covenant of Christ do we follow?

What does it signify to us?

Genesis 17:15-17

Abraham's surprised reaction in this verse reveals a misunderstanding of God's plan. For 13 years (17:25) Abram must have believed the promise of 12:7 & 15:5 would certainly come through Ishmael.

Romans 9:7-8; Galatians 4:21-31

Genesis 17:18-22

Compares with Isaac, what kinds of blessings does Ishmael receive? Why does God provide those blessings?

Genesis 17:23-27

How did Abraham fulfill his responsibility in the covenant? How long did he wait to do so (v. 23)?

Notice how as head of household, Abraham saw to it his whole family and servants also obeyed.

(Joshua 24:15; Acts 16:32-33)

Genesis 18:1-15

“oaks of Mamre” also known as Hebron – remember Genesis 13:18

Verse 1 makes clear one of the men is the LORD. What is the significance of sharing a meal together?

What other sign of the covenant with Christ is connected to sharing a meal? Rev 3:20

In this passage, God again ratifies the promise, and rebukes Sarah's laughter: nothing is impossible for God.