



## The Book of Genesis

### Lesson Number 26



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

#### ----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

**LEXICON LEGEND:** FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# GOD'S THIRD APPEARANCE TO ABRAM

Gen 17:1 "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. <sup>2</sup> And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. <sup>3</sup> And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, <sup>4</sup> As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. <sup>5</sup> Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. <sup>6</sup> And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. <sup>7</sup> And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. <sup>8</sup> And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. <sup>9</sup> And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. <sup>10</sup> This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. <sup>12</sup> And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant. <sup>15</sup> And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. <sup>16</sup> And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? <sup>18</sup> And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! <sup>19</sup> And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. <sup>20</sup> And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup> But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. <sup>22</sup> And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. <sup>23</sup> And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that 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 God had said unto him. <sup>24</sup> And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>25</sup> And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>26</sup> In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. <sup>27</sup> And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him." ..... (Genesis 17:1-27)

## INTRODUCTION

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#### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Twenty-four years after Abram had left Haran, when he was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him for the third time. For the first time in human history, God revealed Himself as *"the Almighty."*

To this point God has revealed Himself to Abram as:

- ➔ His *"Shield"* (Gen 15:1)
- ➔ *"Exceeding Great Reward"* (Gen 15:1)
- ➔ *"The LORD"* (Gen 15:7) (Jehovah <sup>ASV</sup> – the self existing One).
- ➔ *"The Almighty God"* (Gen 17:1).

#### THE NAME "JEHOVAH"

The revelation of the name *"Jehovah"* (represented as *"LORD"* in most versions) appears to contradict what God said to Moses. *"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac,*

*and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them"* (Ex 6:3). Yet, the Hebrew word for *"Jehovah,"* or the English *"LORD"* (Yeh-ho-vaw) is used several times prior to Moses.

It is written that Abram *"called on the name of the LORD"* (Yehovaw) in Genesis 13:4. He *"built an altar unto the LORD"* (Yehovaw) in Genesis 13:18). It is written that Abram *"believed in the LORD"* (Yehovaw) in Genesis (15:6). God said to Abram, *"I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees"* (Gen 15:7). Yet, even in these texts, the Lord referred to Himself as *"LORD"* (*"Yehovaw"*) only once. Our text is the second time He so identified Himself to Abram. He also identified Himself by this name to Jacob (Gen 28:13).

#### Revealed Differently to Moses

Yet, God revealed Himself differently to Moses, **elaborating** on the name *"LORD,"* or *"Yehovaw."* Here is the record.

*"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations"* (Ex 3:13-15).

The answer to the seeming contradiction is found in the fact that God elaborated on His name to Moses,

but did not do so prior to Moses. His name *"Jehovah"* was known, but not with the discernment that came later.

The word *"Jehovah"* means, *"The self-existent and eternal One,"* <sup>STRONG'S</sup> McClintok & Strong's Cyclopedia says of this word: *"HERE THE ALMIGHTY MAKES KNOWN HIS UNCHANGEABLE CHARACTER, IMPLIED IN HIS ETERNAL SELF-EXISTENCE, AS THE GROUND OF CONFIDENCE FOR THE OPPRESSED ISRAELITES TO TRUST IN HIS PROMISES OF DELIVERANCE AND CARE*

#### WHY THE JEWS DO NOT WRITE THE NAME OF GOD.

*"Jews do not casually write any Name of God. This practice does not come from the commandment not to take the Lord's Name in vain, as many suppose. In Jewish thought, that commandment refers solely to oath-taking, and is a prohibition against swearing by God's Name falsely or frivolously (the word normally translated as "in vain" literally means "for falsehood").*

Judaism does not prohibit writing the Name of God per se; it prohibits only erasing or defacing a Name of God. However, observant Jews avoid writing any Name of God casually because of the risk that the written Name might later be defaced, obliterated or destroyed accidentally or by one who does not know better.

The commandment not to erase or deface the name of God comes from Deut. 12:3. In that passage, the people are commanded that when they take over the promised land, they should destroy all things related to the idolatrous religions of that region, and should utterly destroy the names of the local deities. Immediately afterwards, we are commanded not to do the same to our God. From this, the rabbis inferred that we are commanded not to destroy any holy thing, and not to erase or deface a Name of God. It is worth noting that this prohibition against erasing or defacing Names of God applies only to Names that are written in some kind of permanent form. Orthodox rabbis have held that writing on a computer is not a permanent form, thus it is not a violation to type God's Name into a computer and then backspace over it or cut and paste it, or copy and delete files with God's Name in them. However, once you print the document out, it becomes a permanent form. That is why observant Jews avoid writing a Name of God online: because there is a risk that someone else will print it out and deface it." <sup>TRACY R. RICH</sup>

<http://www.jewfaq.org/name.htm>

RESPECTING THEM. THE SAME IDEA IS ELSEWHERE ALLUDED TO IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, E.G. MALACHI 3:6, *"I AM JEHOVAH; CHANGE NOT."* <sup>MCCLINTOK & STRONG'S</sup>

### THE CONCEPT OF AN ETERNAL GOD

The concept of an eternal and unchanging God transcends all human language. **It presents a concept that is outside the boundaries of human intelligence and expression.** Yet, the promises and covenants of God are tied to this name – representing the fact of His unchangeability.

The optimum clarity concerning God has been revealed in Christ Jesus, in whom *“the fulness of the Godhead”* dwells *“bodily”* (Colo 1:19; 2:9).

### FIRST REFERENCE TO CIRCUMCISION

For the first time *“circumcision”* is mentioned in Scripture, and the covenant of circumcision was revealed at this time.

For the first time God revealed Abram would be *“a father of many nations.”* Sarai was renamed, and it was revealed she would be *“a mother of nations.”* Abram laughed at the thought of Sarai, now 90 years old, having a child. For the first time it is revealed that Sarah would have a child, and that he would be named *“Isaac.”* It

was also revealed that *“twelve princes”* would come from Ishmael, and a *“great nation”* would be made of him. However, God’s covenant would be with Isaac, not Ishmael. This was a Divine and unalterable determination.

At ninety-nine years of age, Abraham circumcised himself and all males in his household. Once again, the consistency and immediate response of faith is beheld in Abram, now *“Abraham.”* **Remember, he is the living example and living definition of faith.**

## WHEN ABRAM WAS NINETY-NINE YEARS OLD

Gen 17:1 *“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. <sup>2</sup> And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.”*

### WHEN ABRAM WAS NINETY-NINE

*“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine . . .”*

This is the third time God has

following his departure from Haran, after he had dwelt in Canaan for ten years, he was around eighty-five. Now, the third time, Abram is ninety-nine.

Calculating the time of these appearance according to the current revealed average age of man (70-80), those appearances would have occurred when Abram was thirty-four, thirty-eight, and forty-five. By any standard of human wisdom, this would not have been the ideal circumstance. The

Of course, this is not the last time God moved in such a manner. God saved the human race through Noah, who entered into the ark after he had lived 65% of his total life. He was nearly five hundred years old, Having lived more than 50% of his total life, when he started building the ark (Gen 6:14; 7:6). The forerunner of Christ, an unequaled man himself (Lk 7:28), was raised by a couple that were well stricken in years – Zecharias and Elizabeth (Lk 1:5-7). The infant Jesus was dedicated by an old man (Lk 2:25-35), and an old woman informed those who were waiting for redemption in Jerusalem that the Christ had been born (Lk 2:36-38).

### The Wrongfulness of an Emphasis on Youth

One thing we learn from Scripture, the stress is not placed on youth or youthfulness. **The concept of “the church of tomorrow” is not found in Scripture. It is rather the church of today that is consistently challenged.**

Since the exaltation of entertainment, the western world has placed a great deal of emphasis on the youth. Unfortunately, this emphasis has penetrated the professing church. When

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confronted Abram directly – twice it is said He *“appeared”* to him (Gen 12:7; 17:1), and once *“the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision”* (Gen 15:1). The first appearance was sometime before Abram was seventy-five. The second recorded time was

patriarch had lived over 40% of his entire life when God first appeared to him. **Add to this the fact that God’s work with Abram was an epochal beginning that transcended everything before him.**

it comes to the things of God, older mature people are actually neglected, as though they had reached the pinnacle of spiritual experience. **While all of this may appear quite harmless, it has created a “Christian” culture that is deplorable.**

This does not suggest that the younger generation is to be neglected. That is as wrong as neglecting the older ones. They are to be raised and taught within the framework of spiritual maturity – like Jesus, when, at twelve years of age, he was sitting with the experts in the Law of Moses, *“both hearing them and asking them questions”* (Lk 2:46). By the grace of God, we have pursued this course in The Word of Truth Fellowship. The result is a group of younger brethren who are growing in the Lord.

#### I AM THE ALMIGHTY GOD

*“ . . . the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God . . . ”* Other versions read, *“I am God Almighty,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *God, Ruler of all,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“God all sufficient,”* <sup>GENEVA</sup> *“I am the sovereign God,”* <sup>NET</sup> *“I am El Shaddai,”* <sup>NJB</sup> *“I am your God,”* <sup>ABP</sup> *“I am God All-Powerful,”* <sup>CEV</sup> *“I am God All-Powerful,”* <sup>ERV</sup> and *“I am The Strong God.”* <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

This is the first time the word **“Almighty”** is used in Scripture, and the first time the Hebrew expression “El Shadday” [אֱלֹהִים] is used. The lexical meaning of the word is “SHADDAY {SHAD-DAH<sup>1</sup>-EE} **MEANING:** 1) ALMIGHTY, MOST POWERFUL 1A) SHADDAI, THE ALMIGHTY (OF GOD). <sup>STRONG’S</sup>

This is a fundamental and foundational view of God: **“ALMIGHTY.”** It is an aspect of Deity that flesh cannot comprehend, for there is no earthly parallel to it. **The natural man cannot comprehend anything that extends beyond human experience.**

Fifty-seven times the Scriptures refer to God as **“Almighty.”** Most of those are found from Genesis through Joel. However, in admonishing the

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people of God to separate themselves from all forms of iniquity, the Spirit says, *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”* (2 Cor 6:18). It is as this fact should have been abundantly evident to the Corinthians – but it was not. **They had been classified as “carnal,” and needed to be exhorted to get to the business of cutting the cord to the world.**

In the Revelation, Jesus identified Himself to John saying, *“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty”* (Rev 1:8). The four living creatures that occupy the area of the Throne of God are depicted as saying, *“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”* (Rev 4:8). The twenty elders that were around the throne also cried out, *“We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned”* (Rev 11:17). When John saw those who had *“gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark,”* he heard them singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, saying, *“Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints”* (Rev 15:3). When the vials of God’s wrath were poured out upon the earth, John heard a cry issuing from the altar, *“Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and*

*righteous are thy judgments”* (Rev 16:7). When John saw the glorified Christ, and the armies that were with Him, to bring an end to all tyranny and rebellion, he said he saw this: *“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”* (Rev 19:15). When all enemies had been forever banished from the presence of the Lord, and the saints were seen in serenity and peaceful repose before the Lord, he *“saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it”* (Rev 21:22).

The **“Almighty God”** is one that cannot be successively resisted. No personality or group of personalities can void or detain the fulfilling of His will. What He has purposed He will ,do, whether in heaven or earth. He has no equal or peer, and *“all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”* (Dan 4:35).

#### How Marvelous that God Revealed Himself to Abram in Such a Manner!

This is the first time in history of the world that God revealed Himself as **“the Almighty.”** He would not mention it again for several years, when Isaac blessed Jacob saying, *“And God Almighty bless thee”* (Gen 28:3). Later, when God changed the name of Jacob to Israel, He said, *“I am God Almighty”* (Gen 35:11). Later, before he died,

Jacob told Joseph, *“God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me”* (Gen 48:3).

### Those Who Trust in God Have a Right to be Confident

Because of who He is, and what He can and will do, all who put their trust in God have a right to be confident. They have a right to be full of assurance, fully persuaded, and filled with joy! **The prospects are bright for them, because this is God’s world, and He will accomplish that which He has determined.** Because we have been *“added to the Lord”* (Acts 5:14) by the richness of His grace, we aim to participate in the total and public triumph of His Son.

### WALK BEFORE ME AND BE PERFECT

*“ . . . Walk before Me, and be thou perfect . . . ”* Other versions read, *“walk before Me and be blameless,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“go in my ways and be upright in all things,”* <sup>BEB</sup> *“Walk in My presence and be pure-hearted,”* <sup>CJB</sup> *“Live in My presence and be devout,”* <sup>CSB</sup> *“walk*

and it was counted to him or righteousness. There was no question about his acceptance by God Almighty. **However, those who are accepted by Him to live in a certain manner. While they are not justified by works, their lives are to be lived in a certain manner.**

To walk *“before”* the Lord is to live with an acute consciousness of both His present and His will. It is like walking in the Light – with God Himself being the light (1 John 1:5,7). Stated in New Covenant language, here is how it would be said: *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him”* (Col 3:17). And again, *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor 10:31). And again, *“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s”* (Rom 14:8).

### Responsibility

There is a certain moral

were really the case, washing, cleansing, purification, justification, sanctification, and the new birth itself would be totally unnecessary. All of those have to do with a change of identity, which would not be required if God accepted us *“just as we are.”*

Further, there would be no need for exhortations like, *“be ye holy”* (1 Pet 1:15), *“perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord”* (2 Cor 7:1), *“cleanse your hearts”* (James 4:8), *“mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth”* (Col 3:5) . . . etc. **God has never called men into a morally neutral state, or one that does not require continual progress.** While men may have a vague idea about this, the matter must be pressed upon them. If they have a genuine desire to be blessed by God through Christ Jesus, certain things are expected from them, and, like Abram, they do not have the option of ignoring them, yet obtaining the blessing anyway.

### Viewed This Side of the Cross

Viewed from this side of the cross, this is why we are *“called into the fellowship His Son Jesus Christ our Lord”* (1 Cor 1:9), and fellowship with God Himself (1 John 1:3). It is why we are granted *“the communion of the Holy Spirit”* (2 Cor 13:14), and accounts for why we have been given *“access by one Spirit to the Father”* (Eph 2:18).

**A life that is lived apart from God is totally unacceptable.** Living for self is unlawful in the Kingdom of God. Christ *“died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:15).

### I WILL MAKE A COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND THEE

*“ . . . And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.”* Other versions read, *“I will establish My covenant,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“I will confirm,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“I will set,”* <sup>DARBY</sup> *“I will give you My*

**God has never called men into a morally neutral state, or one that does not require continual progress. While men may have a vague idea about this, the matter must be pressed upon them.**

*before My face, and be perfect,”* <sup>DARBY</sup> *“Live in My presence with integrity,”* <sup>GWN</sup> *“be well-pleasing before Me, and be blameless,”* <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> *“obey Me and live as you should,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> *“live entirely before Me, live to the hilt!”* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> and *“walk and live habitually before Me and be perfect (blameless, wholehearted, complete).”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

How does God demand that a person with faith live? We have the answer in our text. Abram had faith,

responsibility that must follow Divine insights. The Almighty God is not in the business of merely passing along some information. **Any communication with God, particularly when it is initiated by God Himself, carries with it certain responsibilities.** These are briefly summarized in God’s word to Abram: *“Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.”*

The expression that God will accept men with all of their shortcomings and deficiencies is, to say the least, a very clumsy locution. If this

promise," <sup>GWN</sup> "I will grant a covenant," <sup>NJB</sup> "I will prepare a contract between us," <sup>LIVING</sup> "I will keep My solemn promise," <sup>CEV</sup> "If you do this, I will make an agreement between us," <sup>ERV</sup> and "I will make My covenant (solemn pledge)." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This covenant was determined and initiated by God alone. **Abram had no part in the formation or initiation of this covenant.** It was not like the covenant made with Israel. That covenant was initiated only after the Israelites had consented to its requirements. And agreed to keep it without fail (Ex 19:8; 24:3). While the Ten Commandments were the words of the covenant (Ex 34:28), they were not the covenant itself. The covenant was the agreement of the people to live by those words.

#### Paul's Statement Concerning the Covenant

When Paul expounded the covenant made with Abraham, he made a point of the fact that it was not an agreement with Abraham. It was rather a promise. *"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the*

*promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise"* (Gal 3:18).

**The promise of the Seed through whom the world would be blessed was not contingent upon Abraham's response.** This is because Abraham lived by faith, and faith appropriates the resources needed to please God.

#### The New Covenant in Embryo

This promise was, in fact, the New Covenant in embryo. It preceded the New Covenant itself, as well as the Old Covenant. As it is written, *"For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator"* (Gal 3:18-19). It was in this sense that it is written, *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed"* (Gal 3:8). Notice that this pertained to the justification of

the "heathen." It was not that "the heathen," or non-Jews, were the only ones that would be justified. Rather, it is that **from the very beginning, the coming of a Savior, and the message that proclaimed it, was intended for all the world** – "all families" (Gen 12:3), and "all the nations" (Gen 18:18).

**This means that the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27) was not an after-thought.** It was not a change of plan, or the stopping of the prophetic clock, as the dispensationalists affirm. God's purpose has always included the provision of salvation for all men. When the Jews rejected Jesus, and their house was left desolate (Matt 23:38), that did not move the Lord to then take the Gentiles into His purpose. **It did, however, justify God including the Gentiles even though the promise was made exclusively to the Jews, and all of the preparatory work was done among them.** Jesus knew this was the case, and gave this word to His hearers– a word they did not comprehend: *"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd"* (John 10:16).

## GOD TALKED WITH ABRAM

*"<sup>3</sup> And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, <sup>4</sup> As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations."*



#### ABRAM FELL ON HIS FACE

*"And Abram fell on his face . . ."* Other versions read, "fell facedown," <sup>NIV</sup> "went down on his face on the earth," <sup>BBE</sup> "bowed with his face touching the ground," <sup>GWN</sup> "prostrated himself," <sup>NAB</sup> "threw himself on his face," <sup>TNK</sup> "fell face downward in the dust," <sup>LIVING</sup> and "Overwhelmed, Abram fell flat on his face." <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

This was frequently the reaction of those who confronted the Lord Himself, or a messenger from heaven.

➡ Moses "hid his face" before the angel of the bush (Ex 3:6; Acts

7:30).

➡ Moses fell down before the Lord (Deut 9:18,25).

➡ The children of Israel fell on their face when the glory of God appeared (Lev 9:23-24).

➡ Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the Lord (Num 16:20-22,45).

➡ Joshua fell on his face before an angel (Josh 5:14).

In this third appearance, Abram being ninety-nine years old, God revealed for the first time that Sarai would bear the promised heir – Given O. Blakely

- ➔ Manoah and his wife (parents of Samson) fell on their faces before an angel (Judges 13:20).
- ➔ The children of Israel fell on their faces when the Lord consumed Elijah's sacrifice (1 Kgs 18:39).
- ➔ Ezekiel fell on his face when he had visions of God (Ezek 1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 43:3; 44:4).
- ➔ Daniel fell on his face before an angel (Dan 8:17-18; 10:9).
- ➔ Peter, James, and John fell; on their faces on when Jesus was transfigured before them, and God spoke out of heaven (Matt 17:6).
- ➔ Saul of Tarsus fell to the ground when Jesus appeared to him (ACTS 22:7).
- ➔ Paul wrote of a hypothetical case when an unbeliever or stranger entered into an assembly where he became aware of God and fell on his face (1 Cor 14:25).
- ➔ John fell as a dead man before the glorified Christ (Rev 1:17).
- ➔ John fell at the feet of an angel (Rev 19:10; 22:8).

#### The Fallen Nature of Man

When man fell in Adam, a certain enmity was formed between him and God. A sharp variance was created between man and God, as demonstrated in the immediate reaction of Adam and Eve to the voice of the Lord (Gen 3:8-10).

**Men may appear to speak confidently when they philosophize about God, question the validity of His Word, or dare to disobey Him.** But that is only possible because they are unaware of the Lord's presence. When the Lord appears in all of His glory, *"every knee shall bow before Him"* (Isa 45:23; Rom 14:11).

Even now, when the heart

becomes aware that God is confronting the individual, fear grips it, and the people are at once submissive to God (Acts 2:37; 9:6; 16:30).

#### The Present Time

At this present time, the professed Christian world is in a blinded state – one in which it is blissfully unaware of the presence of the Lord. God's Word is not held in high regard. Men are comfortable living in a state of disobedience. Ignoring God's Word. There is not enough consciousness of God to provoke men to seek after Him. Simulated scholars have become critics of the Word of God, and have imposed their own views upon it.

**What is the difference between Abram and this present generation?** It is simply this. He was aware of the presence of the Lord, and they are not! The truth of the matter is that an erroneous gospel is being perpetrated that does not leave the people aware of the God of salvation!

#### GOD TALKED WITH HIM

*" . . . and God talked with him, saying . . . "* Other versions read, *"said to him,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"went on talking with him, and said,"* <sup>BBE</sup> and *"continued speaking with him."* <sup>CJB</sup>

The idea is that when God first addressed Abram (17:1-2), Abram fell down with his face on the ground. Then, while he was prone before the Lord, He continued speaking to the patriarch. Of course, this means that Abram was not unconscious. **His body was on the ground, but his mind was alert and active.** This, of course, is quite different from the mythical experience of being *"slain in the Spirit."* In every Scriptural instance of a person falling down before the Lord, or a messenger from the Lord, a message was both delivered and comprehended.

#### A Principle to Be Seen

Involvement in the working out of the purpose of God requires some form of revelation and comprehension. While

some people have unwittingly been involved in the fulfillment of a Divine purpose (Pharaoh, Sihon, Og, Sennacherib, Caiphas, Judas, etc), **productive and personally beneficial involvement is always within the framework of knowing the Lord and being aware of His purpose.** In His *"great salvation,"* God is not conforming the people to the image of His Son independently of their understanding. It seems to me that such a working would not bring the glory to God that is due His holy name. Candidly, what is called being *"slain in the Spirit"* is a miserable substitute for the acute consciousness of the Divine presence that is produced by faith.

#### AS FOR ME

*"As for Me . . . "* Other versions read, *"Behold,"* <sup>RSV</sup> *"It is I,"* <sup>DARBY</sup> *"I AM,"* <sup>DOUAY</sup> *"And I,"* <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> *"For My part,"* <sup>NJB</sup> *"Lo,"* <sup>YLT</sup> and *"This is my part of our agreement."* <sup>ERV</sup>

The words *"As for me"* are translated from a single Hebrew word.

#### "AS FOR ME"

אֲנִי

<sup>1</sup>ANİY {AN-EE'} **MEANING:** 1) I (FIRST PERS. SING. - USUALLY USED FOR EMPHASIS) **ORIGIN:** CONTRACTED FROM 0595; TWOT - 129; PERS PRON **USAGE:** AV - I, ME, WHICH, FOR I, MINE

This is a word of emphasis – an emphasis upon the Almighty God. **In contradiction of the representation of the English Revised Version, this is not a statement of God's side of the covenant.** The covenant here is not a bilateral, or two sided covenant, with God performing one part and Abram the other. As I have already said, that **IS** the kind of covenant mediated by Moses. It is **not** the kind of covenant that involved the sending of a Savior and the blessing of all nations. A modicum of thought should confirm this to the pure in heart.

Let us be clear about this. **The coming of the promised Seed, and the**

consequent blessing of all nations was **NOT** contingent upon anything that Abraham did. God's word was a promise, not an agreement. This was a unilateral covenant – one sided.

#### UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES

There are Divine workings that are, as regards men, absolutely

- ➡ The exaltation of Jesus (Phil 2:9).
- ➡ The institution of the New Covenant and the passing of the Old Covenant (2 Cor 3:9-11; Heb 8:8-13).
- ➡ The second coming of Christ (Heb 9:28; Heb 10:37).

Therefore, when God says "*As for Me,*" He is introducing something that in no way depends upon any offspring of Adam. The only Person who has a **decisive** part in what God is doing is "*the Man, Christ Jesus*" (1 Tim 2:5).

#### BEHOLD, MY COVENANT

"... behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations."

Here is the announcement of a covenant that was conceived, announced, and instituted by God alone. The Lord is shaping the thinking of men, accustoming them to be God-centered in their thinking.

God will later reveal to Abraham that He had determined to bless "*all the nations of the earth*" (Gen 18:18; 22:18). Now he affirms that Abram will have a part in the formation of these nations. Further, his participation will take place AFTER his body was, reproductively speaking, "*as good as dead,*" and Sarai's womb was "*barren*" (Rom 4:19; Heb 11:11-12).

In this we have a classic illustration of what it means for salvation to be "*not of works*" (Eph 2:8-9).

**There are Divine workings that are, as regards men, absolutely unconditional. Just pointing out a few of them will make this very apparent.**

**unconditional.** Just pointing out a few of them will make this very apparent.

- ➡ The coming of Jesus in the form of a servant to save His people from their sins (Gal 4:4; Matt 1:21).
- ➡ The death of Jesus (Rev 13:8).
- ➡ The resurrection of Jesus (Psa 16:9-10; Lk 24:46; Acts 3:32).
- ➡ The ascension of Jesus (Psa 68:18; Eph 4:8-9).

- ➡ The end of the world (2 Pet 3:10-13).
- ➡ The final demise of the devil, the false prophet, and the beast (Rev 20:10).
- ➡ The day of judgment (Acts 17:31).
- ➡ The appearance of the new heavens and the new earth (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1).

## ABRAM'S NAME IS CHANGED

*"<sup>5</sup> Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. <sup>6</sup> And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee."*

Now, as the time draws near for the promised heir to be born – the beginning of Abram's promised lineage – both revelation and involvement begin to increase. That is a Divine manner

that has historically enabled godly men to discern the times. God desires men to have this kind of knowledge.

- ➡ As the time draw nigh for Israel's deliverance from Egypt, revelation and understanding was increased (Gen 50:25; Ex 3).
- ➡ When the Babylonian captivity was about over, more insights were given through Daniel (Dan 2:5; 19-10).

- ➡ As the time for the Messiah to be born approached, more insights and understanding were granted (Matt 3:1-3).

- ➡ As the time for Christ's second appearing draws near, there will also be certain indicators (2 Thess 2:3).

Throughout history there have been a limited number of people who could

In this third appearance, Abram being ninety-nine years old, God revealed for the first time that Sarai would bear the promised heir – Given O. Blakely



discern the times. The “*children of Issachar*” were especially adept in discerning the times (1 Chron 12:32). Jesus upbraided the Pharisees and Sadducees for not being able to “*discern the signs of the times*” (Matt 16:3).

#### A NEW NAME

Knowing that the time had come for Abram to beget a child through Sarai, the Lord changed his name to reflect his role in the purpose of God.

*“Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham . . .”*

The name “*Abram*” means “exalted father,” <sup>STRONG’S</sup> or “high father.” <sup>HITCHCOCK</sup>

As the name stood at that time, it might have been associated only with Ishmael, who Abram beget through Hagar. To accent the Messianic lineage, Abram’s name was changed.

#### A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE THEE

*“ . . . for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee.”*

In Ishmael, Abram was also the father of “*a great nation*” (Gen 17:20), and “many nations” as well (Gen 25:16). Nations also sprang from the children he had later through Keturah (Gen 25:1-4). However, so far as the purpose of God was concerned,

Abram’s progeny would be of a different sort. He would be the “farther of all them that believe” (Rom 4:11) – else referred to as “*the nations of them which are saved*” (Rev 21:24).

#### KINGS WILL COME OUT OF THEE

*“ . . . and kings shall come out of thee.”*

Kings like Solomon, David, Jehoshaphat, Josiah, Hezekiah, etc, and some Gentile kings as well.

The ultimate King that would be found in his lineage would be “*the King of kings and Lord of lords*” (1 Tim 6:15) – the Lord Jesus Christ, whose kingly lineage would be traced through David (Matt 1:1; Acts 2:29-36).

## GOD ESTABLISHES HIS COVENANT

*“<sup>7</sup> And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. <sup>8</sup> And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”*

This text stands on the border of God’s “*eternal purpose*.” That is, it relates to the appointed entrance of the Messiah into the world. That entrance will be through a specific people (Isa 9:6), and in a particular place (Micah 5:2), and at a fixed time (Gal 4:4). This is the groundwork for that scheduled appointment.

#### I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT

*“And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee . . .”*

Through this chapter, God mentions, or refers to, “*My covenant*” to Abram fourteen times – with thirteen

of them being in the seventeenth chapter (Gen 15:18; 17:2,4,7,9,10,11, 13,14,19,21).

God identifies the covenant with Himself: “*MY covenant*” (Gen 17:2,4,7,9,10,13,14,19,21). He is the

1:11). That, however, cannot be called a covenant as mentioned in our text.

God made a covenant with Noah, declaring He would never again destroy the world with water (Gen 9:12-17). That, however, is a covenant of a lower

**When using this kind of language to Israel, it was always conditional.**

One originating the covenant, and He is the One implementing it.

**In the history of the world, no man ever instituted or initiated a covenant with God.** It is true that Hannah made a vow to the Lord, “*O LORD of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head*” (1 Sam

order than the one mentioned in our text. It deals with the stability of the earth, while the covenant God made with Abraham is related to preparations for the salvation of men.

By saying “*I will establish My covenant*,” the permanency of the covenant is accented. Nothing will be allowed to interfere with it. This is the kind of covenant God made with Noah (Gen 6:18; 9:9,11). Nothing would be able to void that covenant!

When using this kind of language to Israel, it was always conditional. Here is an example: ***“If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them; THEN. . . I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish My covenant with you”*** (Lev 26:3-9). And again, ***“But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth,”*** [in order] ***“that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day”*** (Deut 8:18).

However, with the covenant referred to in this text, there were no conditions. The word “if,” as regards the covenant God made with Abram, is not found in the twelfth through the seventeenth chapters of Genesis. It is true that the males who were uncircumcised would be ***“cut off from his people”*** (Gen 17:14), but that would not void the covenant made with Abram. It would only exclude certain from its privileges.

#### IN THEIR GENERATIONS

***“ . . . and thy seed after thee in their generations . . . ”*** Other versions read, ***“throughout their generations,”*** NASB ***“for the generations to come,”*** NIV ***“generation after generation,”*** CJB and ***“your descendants.”*** CEV

This phrase does not equate to saying “all Jews,” or “all of the people who are in your lineage. The ***“generations”*** would be chosen ones.

Isaac, who was yet to be born, would be distinguished from Ishmael, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

Judah  
Pharez  
Esrom  
Aram  
Aminadab  
Naason  
Salmon  
Boaz  
Obed  
Jesse  
Nathan  
Mattatha  
Menan  
Melea  
Eliakim  
Jonan  
Joseph  
Judah  
Simeon  
Levi  
Jorim  
Eliezer  
Jose  
Er  
Elmodam  
Cosam  
Addi  
Melchi  
Neri  
Salathiel  
Zorobabel  
Rhesa  
Joanna  
Judah  
Joseph  
Semei  
Mattathias  
s  
Maath  
Nagge  
Esi  
Naum  
Amos  
Mattathias  
Joseph  
Janna  
Melchi  
Levi  
Matthat  
Heli

Jacob would be distinguished from Esau. After that, the promise would be to the twelve tribes of Israel in general. So far as the promised Savior was concerned – the Seed through whom ***“all the nations of the earth”*** would be blessed – the generations were chosen by God. After Jacob, that would be forty-nine generations, with a single individual standing for each of them.

This circumstance, among many others, confirms the absolute and unquestionable government of God. If He was not over all, and if His will was not the preeminent will, the Word would never have become flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

#### The Thrust of Sound Teaching

The thrust of sound teaching must be the Lord God and His ***“eternal purpose.”*** All teaching must relate to Him and His purpose. If it does not, it must be discarded by the teachers, and ignored by the hearers.

#### AN EVERLASTING COVENANT

***“ . . . for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee . . . ”***

The word ***“everlasting”*** is used seventy-one times from Genesis through Malachi. We read of an ***“everlasting covenant”*** (Gen 9:16), ***“everlasting possession”*** (Gen 17:8), ***“everlasting hills”*** (Gen 49:26), ***“everlasting priesthood”*** (Ex 40:15), ***“everlasting statute”*** (Lev 16:34), ***“everlasting doors”*** (Psa 24:7) ***“everlasting remembrance”*** (Psa 112:6), ***“everlasting foundation”*** (Prov 10:25), ***“everlasting burnings”*** (Isa 33:14), ***“everlasting joy”*** (Isa 35:10), ***“everlasting sign”*** (Isa 55:13), ***“everlasting name”*** (Isa 56:5), ***“everlasting confusion”*** (Jer 20:11), and ***“everlasting reproach”*** (Jer 23:40).

Some of these have exclusively to do with God Himself: ***“Everlasting God”*** (Gen 21:33), ***“from everlasting to everlasting”*** (Psa 41:3), ***“everlasting arms”*** (Deut 33:27), ***“everlasting***

***kingdom”*** (Psa 145:13), ***“everlasting righteousness”*** (Psa 119:142), ***“the way everlasting”*** (Psa 139:24), ***“everlasting strength”*** (Isa 26:4), ***“everlasting salvation”*** (Isa 45:17), ***“everlasting kindness”*** (Isa 54:8), ***“everlasting light”*** (Isa 60:19) ***“everlasting King”*** (Jer 10:10), and ***“everlasting love”*** (Jer 31:3).

#### The Concept of “Everlasting” Was Not Yet Fully Developed

It was not until later that God was referred to as the ***“everlasting God”*** (Gen 21:33), and centuries later when Moses referred to Him as ***“the eternal God”*** (Deut 33:17). It is that association that served to define the word ***“everlasting”*** more particularly. Until that time, It was understood to denote something that was stable and unchanging.

#### I WILL GIVE THE LAND FOR AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION

***“ . . . And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession . . . ”*** Other versions read, ***“perpetual holding,”*** NRSV ***“eternal heritage,”*** BBE ***“permanent possession,”*** CJB ***“perpetual possession,”*** DOUAY ***“in perpetuity,”*** NJB ***“forever,”*** NLT ***“everlasting holding,”*** TNK ***“a possession age-enduring,”*** YLT ***“to own forever.”*** MESSAGE

#### BELIEVER'S STUDY BIBLE ON “I AM THAT I AM”

***“I AM WHO I AM”*** IS A VERY LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW TEXT, EXPRESSING GOD'S REAL, PERFECT, UNCONDITIONAL, INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE. GOD EXISTS IN A WAY THAT NO ONE AND NOTHING ELSE DOES. HE IS WITHOUT BEGINNING OR END. HE IS THE ONLY BEING WHO IS SELF-EXISTENT. ALL OTHER EXISTENCE IS DEPENDENT UPON HIS UNCAUSED EXISTENCE. JESUS IS THIS SAME GOD [CF. JOHN 8:58; COL 1:15-17; HEB 13:8; REV 1:8]. GOD IS NOT THE ABSTRACT BEING OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY; RATHER HE IS THE ACTIVE, INFINITE, PERSONAL BEING WHO REVEALS HIMSELF AS REDEEMER AND COVENANT-MAKING LORD. HE CAN ONLY BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF HIMSELF, BUT HE IS REVEALED BY WHAT HE SAYS AND WHAT HE DOES (CF. ISA 45:5-7,18-25). GOD'S NAME SURELY INCLUDES THE IDEA OF HIS CONTINUING PRESENCE [CF. EX 3:12]. THE WHOLE CONTENT OF BIBLICAL HISTORY IS A COMMENTARY ON THE MEANING OF THIS NAME [GEN 2:4].

Again, I want to emphasize that the concept of “*eternal*,” “*everlasting*,” or unending, as defined by “*the everlasting God*” Himself (Gen 21:33) is not found in any human language. The reason is that it extends beyond the border of human experience. In matters pertaining to life and godliness, valid human knowledge cannot extend beyond revelation. That ought to be abundantly apparent. Therefore, when God spoke to Abraham concerning “*everlasting*,” he simply could not understand that word as those of later

PERMANENT, PERPETUAL; BOUNDLESS, INFINITE, LIMITLESS, TERMLESS. SYNONYMS CONTINUAL, CEASELESS, CONSTANT, CONTINUOUS, ENDLESS, PERPETUAL, UNCEASING, UNENDING, UNINTERRUPTED.”  
MERRIAM-WEBSTER

**You see how the concepts of self-existent, without beginning, and independent of all causes are not in this definition.** The definition has strictly to do with endurance.

I am persuaded that the new heavens and the new earth will probably bear a remarkable similarity to the present earth. With that in mind, I

*have become their God,”* YLT “*I Myself will be to them for God.*” ABP

There is a sense in which God is the God of everyone – whether they know it or not. As He affirmed, “*Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else*” (Isa 45:22). However, in this text, the point is that the people will **know** He is their God, and will consent to receive Him as such. The prophets spoke of this experience as God said through them, “*and thou shalt know that I am the Lord*” (Isa 49:23; 60:16; Ezek 16:62; Hos 2:20; Zech 2:11, etc).

One of the marks of the New Covenant is that all of its constituents “*know*” the Lord– i.e. None are ignorant of Him (John 17:3; 1 John 5:20).

**There is no such thing as a profitable association with the Living God in which God Himself remains fundamentally unknown.** I do not believe this is commonly known in our present generation. Within the professed church there is a startling degree of ignorance concerning God Himself, His nature, His will, and His purpose. This is precisely why the nominal church is severely lacking even in matters of observable morality. It is why there is a glaring absence of the love of the truth, a sub-normal degree of spiritual understanding, and a lot of confusion concerning sound doctrine and a proper emphasis. It is why mundane matters have captured the attention of professed believers, and social and domestic concerns have upstaged a prevailing interest in the salvation of God.

**Within the professed church there is a startling degree of ignorance concerning God Himself, His nature, His will, and His purpose.**

generations could, when there was more revelation.

The Lord would reveal to Moses the fact that He **is** and has always been – “***I AM THAT I AM***” (Ex 3:14). That expression was most unique, to say the least. It was so unexampled that it proved most challenging to put it into the language of the people.

Later the Lord would speak of things that were “*without end*” (Isa 45:17; Eph 3:21). I want to again stress that no human language is capable of encapsulating the Scriptural idea of “*eternal*” or “*everlasting*.”

The English definition of the word “*everlasting*” is as follows: “LASTING OR ENDURING THROUGH ALL TIME. SYNONYMS AMARANTHINE, CEASELESS, ENDLESS, ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, NEVER-ENDING, UNENDING, WORLD-WITHOUT-END. RELATED WORDS LASTING, PERDURABLE,

can see how Abraham will probably fully inherit the land he was promised, yet never came to inherit during his lifetime. The same may very well have some application to the saved remnant of Israel in the world to come. Else the phrase “*nations of the saved of the earth*” (Rev 21:24) is an exceedingly difficult one to comprehend.

Notwithstanding these cursory observations, these concepts were unknown to Abraham or anyone else during that time. **The promise, therefore, was intended to convey the idea of permanency** – that no external power or influence could negate what God had promised.

**I WILL BE THEIR GOD**

“ . . . and I will be their God.” Other versions read, “*will be a God unto them*,” DARBY “*I will be your God*,” GWN “I

## THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION

“<sup>9</sup> And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their

generations. <sup>10</sup> This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man

child among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of

*the covenant betwixt Me and you.* <sup>12</sup> ***And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.*** <sup>13</sup> ***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.*** <sup>14</sup> ***And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.***”

Notice that immediately upon Abram’s name being changed to “Abraham,” the Spirit ceases to refer to him as “Abram.” The last time the patriarch is referred to as “Abram” historically is in Genesis 17:5, where the fact that his name was being changed is mentioned. The two other times the word “Abram” is used (1 Chronicles 1:27 and Nehemiah 9:7), it is only to point out that his name was changed to “Abraham.”

#### THOU SHALT KEEP MY COVENANT

*“And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations . . .”*

Here God will point out the “token” (Gen 17:11) or “sign and seal” (Rom 4:11) of the covenant, **and not the covenant itself**. Paul makes a point of the fact that the covenant was made prior to the commandment of the “sign and seal” of the covenant, which is now under consideration (Rom 4:11-13). There he equates the “covenant” with “the promise,” which was the Gospel in embryo. *“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise”* (Gal 3:17-18).

The covenant made with Abraham differs from the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, where the people had to agree with the stipulations of the covenant before it was actually “made.” After the agreement of the people (Ex 19:8), Moses took blood and sprinkled both the book of the covenant and the people. As it is written, *“he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people”* (Heb 9:19).

*circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.* <sup>13</sup> *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 . . .”*

In the covenant made with Israel, there had to be a continual outward doing of the Law among the people –

**Admittedly, this was a humbling “token” of the covenant. Several observations can be made concerning this rite. It will at once become evident that in it there was a depiction of the circumcision of the heart – the mark of the New Covenant.**

**This is not the manner of covenant that God made with Abraham.** This covenant was a Divine commitment, not an agreement.

#### Keep My Covenant

Here the word “keep” means “GUARD, TO PROTECT, ATTEND TO . . . BE CIRCUMSPECT, TAKE HEED TO, MARK, REGARD, PRESERVE, SAVE, WATCH.” <sup>STRONG’S</sup>

This is a word that has to do with the mind and heart – with perspective and interest. It involves not forgetting the covenant, pondering it, and frequently musing upon it.

#### THIS IS MY COVENANT

*“ . . . This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.* <sup>11</sup> *And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you.* <sup>12</sup> *And he that is eight days old shall be*

an every day activity. The covenant made with Abraham required a one-time performance among all the males. This was performed eight days after birth, and was not intended to be accomplished after rationality had developed. It was not a repetitive activity in the sense of the Mosaic Law.

#### Circumcision

Admittedly, this was a humbling “token” of the covenant. Several observations can be made concerning this rite. **It will at once become evident that in it there was a depiction of the circumcision of the heart – the mark of the New Covenant.**

- ➡ With the possible exception of Abraham himself (Gen 17:24-26), the circumcision was accomplished by someone other than the one circumcised.
- ➡ The “token” of circumcision was known only to the one receiving it.
- ➡ The circumcision was

accomplished in a private part of the person.

- ➔ The circumcision of one person could not be performed vicariously, or for another person.
- ➔ There was a separation of a part of the person from himself.
- ➔ What was separated was not kept, or maintained. It had to be discarded.
- ➔ Circumcision itself was the sort of thing that was not conducive to personal pride.

➔ God will not allow for exceptions to His requirements.

➔ Divine requirements are not varying, nor do they differ from person to person.

➔ God will not permit his people to continually ignore His Word.

#### THE PENALTY FOR NOT OBEYING

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

**that contradicts what God has said about Himself and His dealings with people.** Is it merely a misunderstanding? Indeed, it is not! Or, is there the remotest possibility that “*cut off*” means the individual of reference will still participate in the promised benefits? Hear Paul expound this matter: *“And if some of the branches be **broken off**, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were **broken off**, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were **broken off**, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be **cut off**”* (Rom 11:17-22).

**Those, therefore, who boast that once a person is saved they cannot be lost, have made God “a liar” (1 John 1:10). They have introduced a theology that contradicts what God has said about Himself and His dealings with people.**

This is to be seen in light of the words of the Head of the church Himself. *“I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit **He taketh away**; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned”* (John 15:1-2,6).

#### The Circumcision of Christ

Answering to the type of circumcision, the antitype is *“the circumcision of Christ”* (Col 2:11-12). This is also accomplished at the beginning of spiritual life, even as the covenant of circumcision was accomplished at that time. This is the circumcision of the flesh– the cutting away of the sinful, or Adamic, nature from the one who is in Christ. It is a circumcision of the heart, as stated in apostolic doctrine: *“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and **circumcision***

- ➔ Everyone who qualified for circumcision was required to be circumcised.
- ➔ Every male in the household had to be circumcised.
- ➔ Once the covenant was in place, the circumcision had to be accomplished eight days after birth. There could be no delay.
- ➔ Every male who was not circumcised was cut off from the people, and could gain no advantage from the covenant.

#### The Nature of God Revealed

In this arrangement we are being exposed to the Divine nature. This is how the Lord thinks, and we do well to take due note of it.

One might imagine that a covenant that is made by God cannot be broken. **As in the case of Abraham, the covenant itself will be fulfilled, but some would be excluded because of their disobedience.** As a nation, Israel broke God’s covenant, and thus whole generations of them were “*cut off*,” with only a remnant being left. Thus it is written, *“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; **which My covenant they brake**, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD”* (Jer 31:32; Heb 8:9). Those people were excluded from the land that was promised to them (Heb 3:19).

Those, therefore, who boast that once a person is saved they cannot be lost, have made God “a liar” (1 John 1:10). **They have introduced a theology**

*is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God*" (Rom 2:29). At the point the heart is circumcised, the heart is no longer described as *"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"* (Jer 17:9).

The parallel is to spiritual life, and the circumcision of the flesh, or sinful nature. Once circumcised, the heart is *"purified"* (Acts 15:9).

From another vantage point, *"the old man"* is crucified, or taken out of dominating activity (Rom 6:6). While *"the flesh"* remains an integral part of the body, it is not a part of *"the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"* (Eph 4:24), or the *"new creation"* (2 Cor 5:17). The part of us that is *"in Christ"*

(1 Cor 1:30) is not *"spotted by the flesh"* (Jude 1:23). In Christ, our essential persons, while dwelling in a *"vile body"* (Phil 3:20-21), is totally separate from *"the flesh,"* which has been cut away by Christ's circumcision.

Here a sleight difference exists. Under the Law, when the foreskin was cut away, it was cast out upon a heap. Thus we read of *"the hill of foreskins,"* associated with the circumcision initiated by Joshua after the people had come into Canaan (Josh 5:3). *"The flesh,"* however, is not discarded in a isolated place. Rather, it is pinioned upon the cross – crucified, in order that it might finally expire, or be *"destroyed"* (Rom 6:6).

#### The Alarming Implications

If it can be established that a

person is still under the dominion of sin, or that he has lapsed back to such a state, **all of the benefits of the New Covenant have been forfeited.** The covenant has been broken. This principle is seen in the covenant made with Abraham (which was the New Covenant in embryo), and in the Old Covenant as well. Now it is also true in Christ Jesus. The professing believer who desires to be *"the friend of the world"* becomes, by virtue of that want, *"the enemy of God"* (James 4:4).

Notwithstanding all objecting arguments, it remains true: *"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother"* (1 John 3:10). **That as not written to the world, but to the churches!**

## SARAI'S NAME IS CHANGED

***"<sup>15</sup> And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. <sup>16</sup> And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her."***

For the first time in all of His communications with Abraham, God brings up Sarai. **He has not mentioned her a single time until this time – when Abraham is ninety-nine years old!** Up to this time, Sarai has been mentioned sixteen times in Genesis (12:5,11,17; 16:12,3,5,6,7; 17:15). The angel that appeared to Hagar mentioned Sarai once (16:8). However she is not mentioned once in any word addressed to Abraham – until at this time, when Abraham was ninety-years old – twenty-four years after he left Haran (12:4). However, what a marvelous thing was made known at that time.

#### SARAI'S NAME IS CHANGED

*"And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be . . ."*

The meaning of the name *"Sarai"* is "MY LADY, MY PRINCESS." The meaning of the name *"Sarah"* is "PRINCESS OF THE MULTITUDE." HITCHCOCK Sarai accented her relationship to Abraham. **Sarah, like Abraham, was**

were concerned, neither Abraham nor Sarah could be considered as having a multitude of children. So far as the final record is concerned, Abraham beget eight children. Sarah only conceived and birthed one. Yet, they were considered parents of a vast multitude. Both Abraham and Sarah had a multitude of offspring through legal and appointed means – succeeding

**For seventy-four generations – from Adam to Joseph and Mary – there had been flesh-and blood offspring, or generations. But the ultimate Offspring, Jesus Christ, had no natural children.**

**associated with the promise and purpose of Almighty God.**

So far as their immediate person's

generations.

#### A Type of Christ Jesus

So far as the flesh is concerned,

In this third appearance, Abram being ninety-nine years old, God revealed for the first time that Sarai would bear the promised heir – Given O. Blakely

**Jesus would have more children than anyone in history! In the end, all of them will be with Him in the glory. That is why He is depicted as saying, “Behold I and the children which God hath given Me” (Heb 2:13).**

Jesus is the ultimate barren one. He was “cut off” without begetting any children in the flesh. Thus Isaiah wrote, “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken” (Isa 53:8). For seventy-four generations – from Adam to Joseph and Mary – there had been flesh-and blood offspring, or generations. But the ultimate Offspring, Jesus Christ, had no natural children.

However, Isaiah continued in the next chapter of his prophecy: “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou

that didst not travail with child: for **more** are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. **Enlarge** the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” (Isa 54:1-2).

**Jesus would have more children than anyone in history! In the end, all of them will be with Him in the glory. That is why He is depicted as saying, “Behold I and the children which God hath given Me” (Heb 2:13).** His children were not begotten by men, but given to Him by God. They were all “begotten” by God (1 John 5:1,18), “through the Gospel” (1 Cor 4:15), then given to

Christ to bring to glory (Heb 2:10).

#### I WILL BLESS HER

*“And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.”*

Now, for the very first time, it is revealed that Abraham will have a son through Sarah – the year before that son was born. This means that Abraham and Sarah acted upon that promise immediately. Scripture states that “by faith also Sarah received strength to conceive seed” (Heb 11:11). Not only was she “past age” (Heb 11:11), but she had been barren from the very first day she was married to Abram (Gen 11:30). In fact, she is the first woman of Scriptural record that was said to have been “barren” (Gen 11:30).

Previously, she rightly stated, “the Lord hath restrained me from bearing” (Gen 16:2). Now, however, she will take hold of the Word of God and think differently about the matter.

## THEN ABRAHAM LAUGHED

*“<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?”*

#### ABRAHAM LAUGHED

*“Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?”*

Note, the name of Abram was instantly changed to Abraham. This is the first time the narrative refers to him as “Abraham” (17:5,9,15,17). He is never again referred to as “Abram,” except in First Chronicles 1:27 and

Nehemiah 9:7, where the change of his name to “Abraham” is reported.

Although the word delivered to Abraham was a promise, it was also a test of his faith. In such a case, his first reaction will not be the final one. Notwithstanding, his first reaction is recorded to accent the greatness of the promise, and to confirm that it was evident it could not be fulfilled unless Divine enablement was given.

Keep in mind that nothing of this magnitude had been promised before – to anyone. This was equivalent to sitting in a den of lions, walking about in a furnace of fire, walking on water, or raising the dead.

At this point, we have to bring Paul’s comment into our consideration. He wrote, “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness” (Rom 4:19-22).

At the very least, this confirms that Abraham did not continue thinking in this manner. However, there is even more here than that. The fact that he

was not rebuked for laughing, as Sarah would be for seemingly doing the same thing (Gen18:12), **suggests this was not the same kind of laughter.** Incidentally, this is the first record in the Bible of someone laughing.

Some notable Bible scholars are of the opinion that this was an expression of joy and wonderment, not of unbelief or mockery (Augustine, Calvin, Delitzsch, Keil, Murphy, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Kalisch). Calvin and Wordsworth add that this was a “SUGGESTION OF NATURAL REASON THAT WAS OVERRULED BY FAITH” PULPIT COMMENTARY John Gill writes, “NOT THROUGH DISTRUST AND DIFFIDENCE OF THE PROMISE, AS SARAH DID, FOR HE STAGGERED NOT AT THAT THROUGH UNBELIEF, BUT FOR JOY AT SUCH GOOD NEWS; AND SO ONKELOS RENDERS IT, “AND HE REJOICED”, WITH THE JOY OF FAITH; IT MAY BE OUR LORD REFERS TO THIS IN JOHN 8:56; HE SAW CHRIST IN THE PROMISE OF ISAAC, AND REJOICED THAT HE SHOULD SPRING FROM HIS SEED: THE TARGUMS OF JONATHAN AND JERUSALEM PARAPHRASE IT, “AND HE

**It does seem reasonable to assume that it was a reaction of human reasoning that was immediately cast down to the ground.**

WONDERED”; HE WAS AMAZED AT THE GRACE OF GOD THAT GAVE HIM SUCH A PROMISE, AND HE WAS ASTONISHED AT THE POWER OF GOD THAT MUST BE EXERTED IN THE FULFILMENT OF IT.” JOHN GILL

Albert Barnes adds, “THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OF WONDER ARE NOT ADDRESSED TO GOD; THEY MERELY AGITATE THE BREAST OF THE ASTONISHED PATRIARCH. HENCE, HIS IRREPRESSIBLE SMILE ARISES NOT FROM ANY DOUBT OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE, BUT FROM SURPRISE AT THE UNEXPECTED MODE IN WHICH IT IS TO BE FULFILLED.” ALBERT BARNES

It is not that commentators add any weight to the Scriptures themselves. I only cite these references to confirm that my own observations are not out of synch with those of other

generations.

I base this view on the fact that Abraham was not rebuked, and that Paul attests he did not consider his own body, or the deadness of Sarah’s womb. I can only conclude that this was not a sinful expression, or one of doubt. **It does seem reasonable to assume that it was a reaction of human reasoning that was immediately cast down to the ground.** To take any other view of the text will greatly complicate our view of faith, its trials, and its triumphs. It suffices to say that the text and context justify a cautious view.

## O THAT ISHMAEL MIGHT LIVE BEFORE THEE

<sup>18</sup> **And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!** <sup>19</sup> **And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”**

### O THAT ISHMAEL MIGHT LIVE BEFORE THEE

“And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!” Other versions read, “If only Ishmael might live under Your blessing!” NIV “might live in Your sight,” NRSV “If only Ishmael’s life might be your care!,” BBE “Why not let Ishmael be my heir?” GWN “Let but Ishmael live on by your favor!,” NAB “May Ishmael live in your presence! That will be enough,” NJB “Yes, do bless Ishmael!,” LIVING “Why not let Ishmael inherit what you have promised me?” CEV “I hope Ishmael will live and serve you,” ERV “Oh, keep Ishmael alive and

well before you!” MESSAGE

Several differing views are presented by the various translations.

- ➡ That Abraham is asking for Ishmael to continue to live. NAB
- ➡ That Ishmael might live under God’s care. BBE
- ➡ That Ishmael might live in God’s presence. NJB
- ➡ That Abraham asks why Ishmael cannot be his heir. GWN
- ➡ That Ishmael would live a life of service to God. ERV
- ➡ That Ishmael might be blessed by God. NIV
- ➡ That Ishmael might be kept alive

and well. MESSAGE

### This Is Not A Petition for Ishmael to Be the Heir

This is not a petition for Ishmael to be the promised heir. God has just finished telling Abraham, “*And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her*” (Gen 17:15-16). It is inconceivable that “the father of all who believe” would contest that word by pleading for Ishmael to be the promised heir. We know from God’s answer that this is not what Abraham meant.

It is quite probable that he thought God could possibly take Ishmael’s life – or that He would withdraw protection from him, throwing him to the adversary, so to speak. So, in my own understanding, he pled for Ishmael’s

In this third appearance, Abram being ninety-nine years old, God revealed for the first time that Sarai would bear the promised heir – Given O. Blakely



life, knowing that he would not be the promised heir any more than the sons Keturah bore to him years later.

From this we also learn that Abraham had come to love Ishmael, being a father to him.

If Jesus taught us to pray for those who “*despitefully*” use us (Matt 5:44), and apostolic doctrine admonishes believers to “*bless*” their persecutors (Rom 12:14; 1 Pet 3:9), **why would anyone chide or despise Abraham for praying or God’s eye to be upon Ishmael?**

#### SARAH SHALL BEAR A SON

“*And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac . . .*” Other versions read, “Then God said: “*No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac,*” NKJV/CEV/ERV/GNB “*Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son,*” ASV “*No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son,*” NASB/CJB/CSB “*Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac,*” NIV “*Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son,*” TNK “*“No,” God replied, ‘that isn’t what I said. Sarah shall bear you a son.*” LIVING “*Yes, behold, Sarah your wife will bear to you a son,*” ABP “*Yea, behold, Sarra thy wife shall bear thee a son,*” BRENTON “*Your wife Sarah truly shall bear you a son,*” LITV and “*That’s not what I mean. Your wife, Sarah, will have a baby, a son,*” MESSAGE

Here again there is total disagreement in the various translations. Some have God saying “*No,*” NKJV/CEV/ERV/GNB/ASV/NASB/NAU/NET while others have Him saying “*Yes,*” NIV/NIB/NJB/ABP/ BRENTON and still others “*nevertheless.*” NAB/TNK Some even read, “*That’s not what I mean,*” MESSAGE and “*that isn’t what I said.*” LIVING

However, God reaffirms His promise, elaborating upon it by declaring what the name of Sarah’s son was to be: “*Isaac,*” which means

“laughter,” HITCHCOCK – not as in mockery, but as in joy and jubilation. In doing this, God gave room for Abraham’s faith to become more strong – to grow, for “*faith cometh by hearing*” (Rom 10:17). If Abraham had been tempted by some distracting thoughts, God’s strong affirmation would enable him to throw them off.

#### I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH ISAAC

“ . . . and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”

The most important thing was the covenant, not the son with whom it would be identified. This has to do with the coming of the Messiah, through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Therefore the attention is thrown upon the covenant rather than the one fleshly offspring with whom it is established. **Yet, the one through whom the covenant would be implemented was already appointment, and that appointment would not be changed.**

I have already shown the generations through whom the Savior came, from Abraham forward. All of them were chosen, just as Isaac was. The generations involved from Adam to Abraham, were as Divinely chosen, as indicated in the chart to the right.

Enough cannot be made of this Divine arrangement. Throughout church history men have debated concerning the choice or election of God. However, it is all needless and out of order, **for in the genealogies leading up to Jesus, every single generation, with not a single exception, was chosen by God.** Further, the choice was made between multiple offspring, sometimes of rather staggering numbers – such as from Adam through Noah.

Adam
Seth
Enos
Cainan
Maleleel
Jared
Enoch
Methuselah
Lamech
Noah
Shem
Arphaxad
Cainan
Sala
Eber
Phalec
Ragau
Saruch
Nachor
Tera

This concept continues on into the salvation of God, which, by revelation, is associated with **Divine choice** (Matt 20:16; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 2:9), **predestination** (Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:5,11), and **election** (Matt 24:22,24; Rom 8:33; 11:5,28; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:42 Tim 2:10; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:21; 5:13; 2 Pet 1:10; 2 John 1:1,13).

Of course, the Savior Himself is called “*Elect*” (Isa 42:1; 1 Pet 2:6). **Jesus told the twelve they had not chosen Him, but He had chosen them:** “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you*” (John 15:16). In His Gethsemane prayer, He acknowledged that God had given these men to Him (John 17:9,11). He also affirmed that He would give eternal life to as many as God had **given to Him** (John 17:2).

Also consider that every leading and key person in Scriptural history was chosen by God. This includes men like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David, and all of the Prophets.

There was also the nation of Israel, which is declared to have been chosen by God, and that without any qualifying merit on their part (Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18-19).

Thus Divine choice, or election, is associated with:

- ➡ The progenitors of the Messianic lineage (Seth, Enos, etc).
- ➡ Noah and his family.
- ➡ The progenitors of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).
- ➡ Israel itself
- ➡ Key men in Israel, like Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Solomon, David).

- ➡ All of the Prophets
- ➡ John the Baptist
- ➡ The parents of John the Baptist.
- ➡ The Lord Jesus Christ

- ➡ The mother of Jesus
- ➡ The apostles
- ➡ The church
- ➡ Individuals that are saved.

Throughout Scripture we are cultured to think of God as a Chooser, One who elects, and One who predestinates. I do not see how any person of intellectual integrity can justify being opposed to such a view of God. God has revealed Himself in this capacity, and are to accept it.

## AS FOR ISHMAEL

*"<sup>20</sup> And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup> But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."*

We know from this answer that Abraham was not praying that Ishmael would be the heir with whom the promised covenant would be established. While some versions represent God as saying "No" to Abraham's request, the text actually focuses on a positive answer.

### I HAVE HEARD THEE

*"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee . . ."* Other versions read, *"I have given ear to your prayer,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"I have heard your request about Ishmael,"* <sup>GWN</sup> *"I am heeding you,"* <sup>NAB</sup> *"I grant you your request,"* <sup>NJB</sup> *"I have heard what you asked me to do for Ishmael,"* <sup>CEV</sup> *"Yes, I heard your prayer for him,"* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> *and "I have heard and heeded you."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

As used in this text, the word

### MEANING OF "HEARD"

שָׁמַע

SHAMA` {SHAW-MAH} MEANING: 1) TO HEAR WITH ATTENTION OR INTEREST, LISTEN TO 2) TO UNDERSTAND 3) GIVE HEED 4) TO CONSENT, AGREE 5) TO GRANT REQUEST 6) TO LISTEN TO, YIELD TO.

"heard" indicates a favorable response to Abraham's request. **God will give the patriarch what he has asked – which necessarily means he did not ask for Ishmael to be the promised heir.** Instead, he asked for God to bestow a blessing upon Ishmael, as compared to cursing him as He did Cain.

### I HAVE BLESSED HIM

*" . . . Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation . . ."*

Notice the strength of the Lord's reply. *"I have heard thee . . . I have blessed him . . . I will make him fruitful . . . I will multiply him exceedingly . . . twelve princes shall he beget . . . I will make him a great nation."*

If we were being confronted with anything but the promise of God, that commitment would be considered an unparalleled blessing. There are men who would give anything – even their own souls – to be guaranteed such benefits. **But when it comes to the purpose of Almighty God, such benefits are paltry.** All of the benefits given to Ishmael were for this world, and therefore would pass away. Further, although he "blessed" Ishmael, he did not say his seed would be blessed, or that all families of the earth would be blessed through him.

You may recall that when Joseph

was sold by his brothers into slavery, it was to a band of Ishmaelites, who were *"bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt"* (Gen 37:25-28).

### BUT MY COVENANT WILL BE WITH ISAAC

*"But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."*

This was the covenant that Paul also calls *"the promise"* (Gal 3:17), and it is associated with the coming of Christ into the world, to *"save His people from their sins"* (Matt 1:21).

Notice the particular language that reflects Divine determination and workings.

- ➡ *"I will establish."*
- ➡ *"Isaac, which Sarah shall bear."*
- ➡ *"At the set time."*
- ➡ *"Next year."*

### Paul Makes A Point of This

Referring to this passage of scripture, Paul makes a point of the covenant being established with Isaac. *"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."*

In this third appearance, Abram being ninety-nine years old, God revealed for the first time that Sarai would bear the promised heir – Given O. Blakely

***For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son*** (Rom 9:6-9).

Beginning with the case of Isaac, Paul establishes that everyone with fleshly roots to Abraham are not necessarily “children” – i.e., children of the covenant. His argument is that there is a “remnant” within the Jewish nation that, as God reckons things, can be traced back to Abraham (Rom 9:27; 11:5).

As Jesus spoke to the Jews, He spoke in terms of a people within a people – an accepted people with a greater mass of people.

➔ *“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and **given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof**”* (Mat 21:43).

➔ *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word**, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:31-32).

➔ *“He that is of God **heareth God’s words**: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God”* (John 8:47).

➔ *“My sheep **hear My voice**, and I know them, and they **know Me**”* (John 10:27).

➔ *“ . . . He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they **know his voice**”* (John 10:4).

#### The Same Principle Declared to the Church

The same principle applies to professing Christendom. Among this hodgepodge of professing “Christians” there are some who are genuinely the people of God. Writing to professing believers, several statements are made that serve to distinguish the remnant that is truly identified with Christ.

➔ *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but **they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit**. For to be carnally minded is death; but **to be spiritually minded is life and peace**. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”* (Rom 8:5-8).

➔ *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the*

*not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him”* (1 John 3:6).

➔ *“We know that **we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren**. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death”* (1 John 3:14).

➔ *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and **every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God**. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love”*

**We are living in an era when men take discipleship for granted, even though Jesus spoke quite specifically about those who could not be one of His disciple**

*Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and **I will receive you**, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”* (2 Cor 6:18).

➔ *“And they that are Christ’s **have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts**”* (Gal 5:24).

➔ *“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. **They went out from us, but they were not of us**; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us”* (1 John 2:19).

➔ *“If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that **every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him**”* (1 John 2:29).

➔ *“Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth*

*(1 John 4:7-8).*

These qualifying statements are to be taken seriously, and not glossed. **This brief sampling confirms that God does not take men’s professed affiliation with Him for granted.** We are living in an era when men take discipleship for granted, even though Jesus spoke quite specifically about those who could not be one of His disciple (Matt 10:37-38; 16:24-25; Lk 14:26,33). There are people – people who have been singularly blessed by Gods – yet who also return fruit to Him as is appropriate (Rom 7:4). The Spirit likens them to ground that has been adequately prepared for an abundant harvest. Here are His words: *“For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak”* (Heb 6:7-9).

## GOD LEFT OFF TALKING

***“<sup>22</sup> And He left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”***

Other versions read, *“finished talking,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“having said these words,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“when He was done speaking with him,”* <sup>TNK</sup> *“That ended the conversation,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> *“He completed speaking to him,”* <sup>ABP</sup> *and God stopped talking with him.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

After He had finished speaking with Abraham, God *“went up”* from him, signifying the conclusion of the one sided conversation. The **only** words Abraham spoke to God were, *“O that Ishmael might lie before Thee”* (Gen 17:18). The only other words Abraham is recorded as saying to God are, *“Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir”* (Gen 15:2-3).

In Abraham the words of Solomon are certainly fulfilled: *“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few”* (Eccl 5:2).

**Observe that all of God’s words to Abraham were concerning His own purpose, and how it would be carried out.** On the other side, Abraham only spoke to God about things related to His purpose. None of his words were the expression of unbelief, and they always conformed to the revelation that

he was given.

### A LESSON TO BE LEARNED

I realize this is a very sensitive subject, and yet it is something that should be addressed. During the last few decades, there has been a great stress placed on a “personal God” – of God’s relationship with the individual. Little of this stress takes the purpose of God into account. God is set forth as having an intense interest in the personal affairs of men – even down to

*live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:15).

➡ *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”* (Gal 2:20).

➡ *“For we which live are alway*

**I do want to point out that I am speaking of an EMPHASIS of the details of living in this world, as compared with Divine objectives that outlast the world.**

the jots and tittles of life. It all sounds good – but how should the saints of God view such an accent. **I do want to point out that I am speaking of an EMPHASIS of the details of living in this world, as compared with Divine objectives that outlast the world.**

While I by no means am suggesting that God should not be brought into every aspect of our lives, it is necessary to say that **our** lives must not be allowed to receive the accent. This should be very apparent from statements like the following.

➡ *“And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth*

*delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh”* (2 Cor 4:11).

**For those in Christ, there is a higher cause for living, and a more profound and profitable objective than self-satisfaction.** The difficulties that we face often introduce unique needs for grace, and we should never be hesitant to present them to the Lord. When we are actually living for the Lord it will impact on the kind of experiences we have, and why they are introduced into our lives.

## ABRAHAM CARRIES OUT THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION

***“<sup>23</sup> And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that 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 God had said unto him. <sup>24</sup> And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh***

of his foreskin. <sup>25</sup> And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>26</sup> In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. <sup>27</sup> And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him."

Notice the thoroughness that characterizes Abraham's obedience. Remember, the command of the Lord concerning circumcision included the following.

- ➔ Every man child "among you," or in the household of Abraham, was to be circumcised (Gen 17:10).
- ➔ Abraham himself was to be circumcised (Gen 17:11).
- ➔ He that was born in his house was

to be circumcised (Gen 17:12).

- ➔ Every man child born in his house (17:12a).
- ➔ Any male bought with money from a "stranger," or foreigner, <sup>NIV</sup> who was nor Abraham's offspring (Gen 17:12-13).

Any male who "is not circumcised," God said, "that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant" (Gen 17:14).

Now, behold with what precision Abraham carried out this Divine requirement.

- ➔ Ishmael was circumcised (Gen 17:23a).
- ➔ All that were born in his house was

circumcised (Gen 17:23b).

- ➔ All that were bought with money were circumcised (Gen 17:23c).
- ➔ At the age of ninety-nine Abraham himself was circumcised (Gen 17:24).

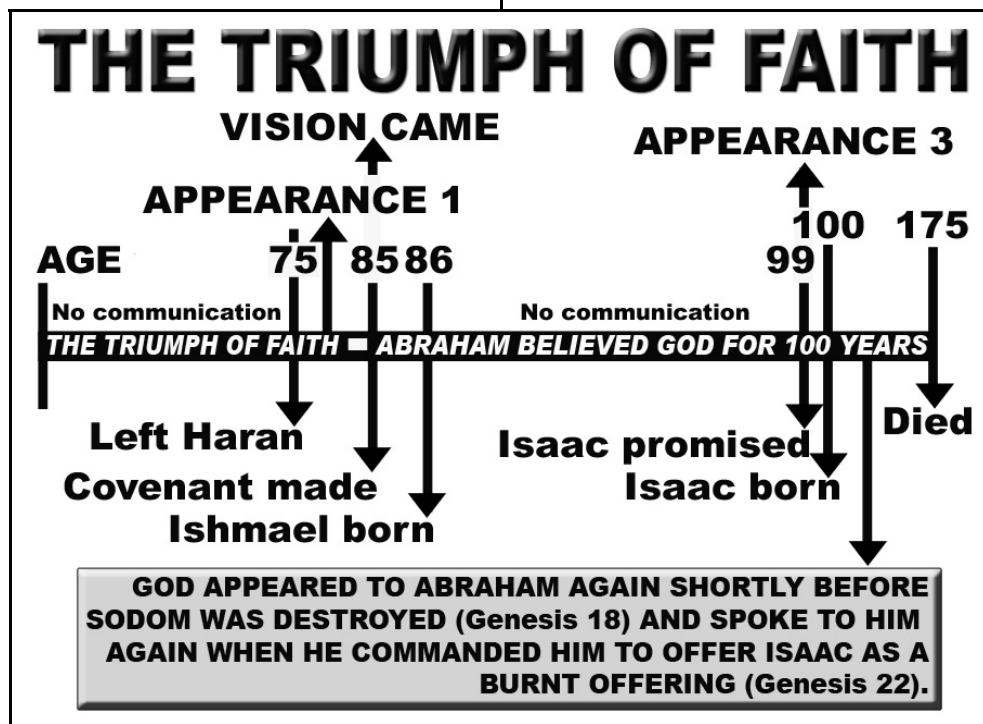
It is then stated that all of this was done in the selfsame day. The summary is stated in these words, "**In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him**" (Gen 17:27).

Here we are given to see the nature of obedience that proceeds from faith – it is thorough and immediate; instant, with no delay.

## CONCLUSION

We have been exposed to "the faith of Abraham; who is the father of

us all" (Rom 4:16). Showing the relevancy of Abraham's faith to those who are in Christ Jesus, Paul writes the following. "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are **the children of Abraham**. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal 3:7-9).



I want to stress that any faith that is not harmonious with the faith of Abraham is spurious. It is neither real nor accepted by God. Abraham is a living definition of faith, and how it impacts those possessing it. This is the kind of faith we are expected to have – to "walk in the steps of our father abraham" (Rom 4:12). The promise of God that concerns salvation, or receiving the blessing that comes

through Christ, is pointedly said to be to that person *“with is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all”* (Rom 4:16). The Amplified Bible reads this way: *“Therefore, [inheriting] the promise is the outcome of faith and depends [entirely] on faith, in order that it might be given as an act of grace (unmerited favor), to make it stable and valid and guaranteed to all his descendants—not only to the devotees and adherents of the Law, but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, who is [thus] the father of us all. As it is written, I have made you the father of many nations. [He was appointed our father] in the sight of God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead and speaks of the nonexistent things that [He has foretold and promised] as if they [already] existed.”*

For the informed and honest soul, the rarity of this kind of faith is glaringly evident. **This is the revelation of the kind of generation in which are living.** Although it is a Gentile generation, it bears remarkable similarity to the generation to whom Jesus ministered when He *“went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him”* (Acts 10:38).

**Jesus Himself said of that generation:** *“But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like little children sitting in the marketplaces who call to their playmates, We piped to you [playing wedding], and you did not dance; we wailed dirges [playing funeral], and you did not mourn and beat your breasts and weep aloud”*

AMPLIFIED (Matt 11:16-17).

Speaking of a condition that would after he had left the scene of warfare, Paul said much the same thing as Jesus: *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”* (2 Tim 4:3-4).

**This describes a circumstance where the people have preferences that pertain to their private assessment of life.** They will turn their ears from the preacher or teacher who fails to give them what they want: *“their own lusts”* – and their desires have little, if anything at all, to do with eternity and the revealed purpose of God.

All of this is to be compared with the faith of Abraham. It will confirm that we are living in the *“falling away”* that was foretold by Paul (2 Thess 2:3).

It is to be acknowledged that this falling away has come at differing times and in various stages.

- ➡ First, there was the declining that took place in apostolic times.
- ➡ Second, a falling away accelerated when the church was popularized, and Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire.
- ➡ Third, it was seen in the institutionalization of the church, when there was an attempt to commingle the world, certain aspects

of Judaism, and apostolic doctrine.

- ➡ Fourth, when human reason was exalted in the Enlightenment, further corruption crept in, and the falling away became even worse. At that time men – religious men – became judges of God and His Word.
- ➡ Fifth, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, time was created in which men could be more discreet about their investment in it. Rather than choosing to give God more time, men – even religious men – gave more time to self-satisfaction. Now the falling away added the element of entertainment to religion, feeding even more the lusts of men.
- ➡ Sixth, in harmony with the theory of evolution and its rapid spread, a body of knowledge was developed called psychiatry. It focused on the individual providing explanations for human conduct that were not harmonious with Scripture, and providing a supposedly rational explanation for the love of self.

We are now living in the full aftermath of these diversions. **As a result, the significance, nature, and necessity of faith are hardly known in any church circles.** Truth, as it did in Isaiah’s day, has *“fallen in the street”* (Isa 59:14). As we might expect, in this time Abraham is not set forth as the premier example of faith. In fact, relatively little is known about him.

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 1/27/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The twenty-sixth lesson will cover verses 1 through verse 27 of chapter Seventeen: “GOD’S FOURTH APPEARANCE TO ABRAM.” This appearance took place when Abram was ninety-nine years old – twenty-four years after he had left Haran. During this occasion, Abram’s name was changed to “Abraham,” and Sarai’s to “Sarah.” The covenant of circumcision was instituted at this time. Abraham, still not knowing that the intended “seed” would be born through Sarah, pleads for Ishmael to be considered. God then, for the first time, reveals that Sarah would bear the promised child. Ishmael was thirteen years old at the time. Following the revelation, all of the males in Abraham’s household were circumcised as God commanded. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.**

## FIRST THINGS IN GENESIS (Gen 1:1-17:27)

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|--|--|
| 1. First mention of God (Gen 1:1)                                | 51. First human substitute (Gen 4:25)  |
| 2. First use of the word “created” (Gen 1:1)                     | 52. First Calling on the name of the Lord (Gen 4:26)                               |
| 3. First circumstance of chaos and disorder (Gen 1:2)            | 53. First genealogy (Gen 5:1-32)   |
| 4. First mention of darkness” (Gen 1:2)                          | 54. First person said to have walked with God (Gen 5:22)                           |
| 5. First mention of the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2)                    | 55. First Translation into heaven – Enoch (Gen 5:24)                               |
| 6. First commandment (Gen 1:3)                                   | 56. First unequal yoke (Gen 6:2)   |
| 7. First mention of “light” (Gen 1:3)                            | 57. First men of the Spirit striving with men (Gen 6:3)                            |
| 8. First none-heavenly orderliness (Gen 1:4-10)                  | 58. First reference to a society of ruthless men (Gen 6:4)                         |
| 9. First Separation (Gen 1:4,7)                                  | 59. First reference to man’s thoughts being corrupt (Gen 6:4).                     |
| 10. First Day and night (Gen 1:5)                                | 60. First reference to God repenting (Gen 6:6).                                    |
| 11. First mention of “evening” and “morning” (Gen 1:5)           | 61. First reference to a universal judgment (Gen 6:2).                             |
| 12. First mention of “firmament” (Gen 1:6)                       | 62. First reference to a person finding grace (Gen 6:).                            |
| 13. First use of the word “appear” (Gen 1:9)                     | 63. First reference to a man who was just and perfect in his generation (Gen 6:9). |
| 14. First Terrestrial substance (Gen 1:10)                       | 64. First reference to the total corruption of humanity (Gen 6:12).                |
| 15. First Vegetation life (Gen 1:11-12)                          | 65. First reference to “the end of all flesh” (Gen 6:13).                          |
| 16. First Celestial substance (Gen 1:16)                         | 66. First Large building project (Gen 6:4-16).                                     |
| 17. First sea-life (Gen 1:20-22)                                 | 67. First boat built (Gen 6:14-15).  |
| 18. First fowl (Gen 1:20)  | 68. First reference to a flood (Gen 6:17).   |
| 19. First Animal life (Gen 1:24-25)                              | 69. First Covenant made with a man (Gen 6:18).                                     |
| 20. First language of plurality in the Godhead (Gen 1:26)        | 70. First reference to someone being saved (Gen 6:18).                             |
| 21. First Man (Gen 3:19)   | 71. First reference to the gathering of animals (Gen 6:19-20).                     |
| 22. First Warning (Gen 2:17)                                     | 72. First reference to the gathering and storage of food (Gen 6:21).               |
| 23. First Display of human wisdom (Gen 2:19-20)                  | 73. First reference to someone doing all that God had commanded (Gen 6:22).        |
| 24. First Woman (Gen 2:21-22)                                    | 74. The first person God affirmed He saw as “righteous” (Gen 7:1).                 |
| 25. First Marriage (Gen 2:22-24)                                 | 75. First Salvation of a family (Gen 7:1).   |
| 26. First Exposure to Satan (Gen 3:1)                            | 76. First record of someone being saved because of another (Gen 7:1).              |
| 27. First Temptation (Gen 3:1-5)                                 | 77. First record of animals being saved (Gen 7:8).                                 |
| 28. First delusion (Gen 3:6)                                     | 78. First rain (Gen 7:12).   |
| 29. First Sin (Gen 3:8)  | 79. First and only universal flood (Gen 7:18-20).                                  |
| 30. First Knowledge of nakedness and its shame (Gen 3:7)         | 80. First opening of the fountains in the earth (Gen 7:2,11).                      |
| 31. First Divine interrogation (Gen 3:9-13)                      | 81. First opening of the windows of heaven (Gen 7:11).                             |
| 32. First Vicarious death (Gen 3:21)                             | 82. First global curse (Gen 7:21-23).  |
| 33. First Divinely provided clothing (Gen 3:21)                  | 83. First destruction of every living substance (Gen 7:23).                        |
| 34. First Promise (Gen 3:15)                                     | 84. First time God is said to have remembered someone (Gen 8:1).                   |
| 35. First Curse among men (Gen 3:17)                             | 85. First record of a drying wind (Gen 8:1).                                       |
| 36. First expulsion (Gen 3:23-24)                                | 86. First confirmation of newness of life following a curse (Gen 8:11).            |
| 37. First Birth (Gen (Gen 4:1)                                   | 87. First record of a deliverance (Gen 8:18-19)                                    |
| 38. First Offering (Gen 4:3)                                     | 88. First building of an altar (Gen 8:20).   |
| 39. First accepted sacrifice (Gen 4:4)                           | 89. First known sacrificial offering of multiple creatures (8:20).                 |
| 40. First rejected sacrifice (Gen 4:5)                           | 90. First time God is said to have been pleased with an                            |
| 41. First human reaction to a rejected sacrifice (Gen 4:5)       |  |
| 42. First time a man became angry (Gen 4:5-6)                    |  |
| 43. First Divine response to human anger (Gen 4:6-16)            |  |
| 44. First Murder (Gen 4:8)                                       |  |
| 45. First wanderer or vagabond (Gen 4:12)                        |  |
| 46. First mark put on a man (Gen 4:15)                           |  |
| 47. First man to go out from the presence of the Lord (Gen 4:16) |  |
| 48. First city built (Gen 4:17)                                  |  |
| 49. First case of bigamy (Gen 4L19)                              |  |
| 50. First instance of retaliation (Gen 4:23)                     |  |

- offering (Gen 8:21).
91. First promise of continued seedtime/harvest, summer/winter, day/night (Gen 8:22).
92. First Deliverance from the world (Gen 8:18).
93. First New beginning (Gen 9:21-22).
94. The first mention of animals fearing mankind (Gen 9:2).
95. The first addition to the human diet (Gen 9:3).
96. The first approval of eating meat (Gen 9:3-4).
97. The first prohibition of eating blood (Gen 9:4).
98. The first authorization of capital punishment (Gen 9:5-6).
99. The first covenant established with the seed of a principle person (Gen 9:9).
100. The first covenant with living creatures (Gen 9:10).
101. The first promise to never again cut off all living beings with a flood (Gen 9:11).
102. The first token of a covenant (Gen 9:12).
103. The first reference to a rainbow (Gen 9:13-17).
104. The first reference to God remembering a covenant He made (Gen 9:15-16).
105. The first reference to a husbandman (Gen 9:20).
106. The first reference to a vineyard (Gen 9:20).
107. The first reference to wine (Gen 9:21).
108. The first reference to a person becoming drunk (Gen 9:21).
109. The first curse uttered by a man (Gen 9:25).
110. The first blessing uttered by a man (Gen 9:26).
111. The first reference to a servant (Gen 9:25-26).
112. The first reference to the enlargement of one's territory (Gen 9:27).
113. The first mention of the "Gentiles" (10:5).
114. The first mention of "nations" (10:5).
115. The first mention of "families," tribes, or classes of people (10:5,18,20,31,32).
116. The first mention of "isles," or maritime countries (10:5).
117. First mention of a hunter (Gen 10:9).
118. First mention of a kingdom (10:10).
119. First mention of Babel (Gen 10:10).
120. First mention of Nineveh (Gen 10:12).
121. First mention of Canaanites (Gen 10:18).
122. First mention of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 10:19).
123. First mention of "tongues," or languages (Gen 10:5,20,31).
124. The first mention of different nations "divided in the earth" (Gen 10:32).
125. The first mention of a group of people traveling (Gen 11:2).
126. The first example of agreement among men (Gen 11:3).
127. The first mention of "brick" (11:3).
128. The first mention of "mortar" (Gen 11:3).
129. The first mention of the tempering of brick (11:3).
130. The first mention of a "tower" (11:4).
131. The first mention of a fear of being "scattered" (11:4).
132. The first mention of the Lord coming "down" (11:5).
133. The first mention of human potential (11:6).
134. The first record of God's assessment of a collective work (11:5-6).
135. The first record of God's response to a collective work (11:6-7).
136. The first record of God scattering a people (11:8).
137. First Judgment of a human project (11:8).
138. First Dispersion of humanity (11:8).
139. First record of a son dying before his father (11:28).
140. The first barren woman (11:30).
141. The first mention of the land of Canaan (Gen 11:31).
142. First Calling from one place to another (Gen 12:1)
143. First Divine direction concerning a move (Gen 12:1)
144. First Covenant of blessing (Gen 12:2-3)
145. First mention of a Divinely created nation (Gen 12:2)
146. First mention of acquired wealth (Gen 12:5)
147. First mention of servants, or slaves (Gen 12:5)
148. The first time God is said to have "appeared" to anyone (Gen 12:7).
149. First Famine (Gen 12:10)
150. First trip from Canaan to Egypt (Gen 12:10)
151. First person to treat another person well for the sake of another person (Gen 12:18)
152. First example of God cursing those who cursed Abram (Gen 12:17)
153. First examples of plagues coming from the Lord (Gen 12:17)
154. First trip from Egypt to Canaan (Gen 12:20-13:3)
155. First man mentioned who was rich: Abram (Gen 13:2)
156. The first example of a territory being unable to sustain those in it (Gen 13:6)
157. The first example of a dispute among employees (Gen 13:7)
158. The first separation of kindred spirits (Gen 13:8-12)
159. The first commanded perusal of the land of Canaan (Gen 13:17)
160. First use of the word "Hebrew" (Gen 14:13)
161. The first military initiative by a man of faith (Gen 14:14-15)
162. The first mention of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18a)
163. The first mention of a "priest of the most High God" (Gen 14:18b)
164. The first mention of a king who was also a priest (Gen 14:18)
165. The first mention of "bread and wine" (Gen 14:18)
166. The first mention of enemies being delivered into one's hand by the Lord (Gen 14:20a)
167. The first mention of "tithes" (Gen 14:20b)
168. First Vision (Gen 15:1).
169. First record of the words "Fear not" (Gen 15:1)
170. First revelation of God in a protective capacity (Gen

In this third appearance, Abram being ninety-nine years old, God revealed for the first time that Sarai would bear the promised heir – Given O. Blakely



- 15:1).
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| <p>171. The first reference to God as a “Reward” (Gen 15:1).<br/>172. First reference to someone believing God (Gen 15:6).<br/>173. First mention of righteousness (Gen 15:6).<br/>174. First mention of man inheriting something (Gen 15:7).<br/>175. First prophecy of a being judged (Gen 15:14).<br/>176. First reference to iniquity being “full” (Gen 15:16).<br/>177. First use of the word “handmaid” (Gen 16:1).<br/>178. First mention of “Hagar” (Gen 16:1).<br/>179. First mention of God restraining a woman from bearing children (Gen 16:2).<br/>180. First time a wife’s handmaid bore children to her for her husband (Gen 16:4).<br/>181. First mention of an angel (Gen 16:7).<br/>182. First mention of “the angel of the Lord” (Gen 16:7),<br/>183. First message delivered by an angel (Gen 16:8-12).<br/>184. First time a name was given to a child according to</p> | <p>revelation (Gen 16:11).<br/>185. First time someone gave a name to God (Gen 16:13).<br/>186. First time “Almighty” is mentioned (Gen 17:1).<br/>187. First time God is expressly said to have “talked” extensively with someone (Gen 17:3-22).<br/>188. First time a person was told he would be the father of “many nations” (Gen 17:4-5).<br/>189. First time someone was told “kings” would come out of him (Gen 17:6).<br/>190. First time abraham was told Sarah would bear the heir (Gen 17:19,21).<br/>191. First time “circumcision” is mentioned (Gen 17:10-13).<br/>192. First time circumcision was performed (Gen 17:23-27).</p> |
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## *2012 Refreshing Waters Renewal, #23*

**July 31, August 2, 2012  
Diamond Grove Christian Church  
Diamond Grove, Missouri**

**Theme: THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST**

**An exposition of the reality of, and purpose for, the  
Exaltation of Christ. The implications of this exaltation  
will also be affirmed with Gospel power.**

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, and Eva*

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## **THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP**

**WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>**

**A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.**

**Additional Website for Word of Truth Fellowship: <http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>**

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**WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>**

### **BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES**

**COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Hosea: <http://wotruth.com/hoseaindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Philippians: <http://wotruth.com/philippiansdindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on First Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/1sthessindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Second Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/2ndthessindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Hebrews: <http://wotruth.com/hebindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on First Peter: <http://wotruth.com/1stpetindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on First John: <http://wotruth.com/1stjohnindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Revelation: <http://wotruth.com/revelationindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Mark: <http://wotruth.com/Mark.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Titus: <http://wotruth.com/Titus.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Malachi: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Galatians: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Genesis: <http://wotruth.com/Genesis.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Ephesians: <http://wotruth.com/Ephesians.htm>**

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