

17:1

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, 13 years elapse between chapters, then, **the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him**, God first appeared to him 24 years ago (12:4). This is significant. It has been 24 years since He received a promise—the main thing, of which, is a natural-born descendant. The lesson is that “hearing from God” does not mean immediate movement by God. We’ll see more of this with Joseph.¹

“I am Almighty God; Now, the first person we’re told that knows that *Elohim* is *Jehovah* is Eve. She used both names when she said “I have gotten a man” (chapter 4). In Genesis 14, Melchizedek gives God the name *El Elyon*. Later in chapter 16 we have an Egyptian girl calling Him *El Roi*. They are calling *Jehovah* certain things that they give Him names to reflect His actions. Of course, these names/actions reflect His character: He “is” certain things so He “does” certain things. In other words, it is impossible but that He “does.” God “does.” Psalm 150 says “Praise Him for His Mighty acts.” It is impossible to know Him without knowing His Works. His character drives His Works which drives our worship.²

Take *Elohim* in Genesis 1:1: The first thing we know about God is not a characteristic outside of work, but rather a work that tells of His characteristics and attributes. The God of Heaven is not merely propositional or faith-based dogma. He works. John 5:17 is the testimony of Jesus that “My Father works until now...”

We are approximately 2000 years into human history when we hear of another name for God. Why? Does God take this long? Maybe the answer is in the preceding verse: It has been 13 years since Ishmael was born. Perhaps, Abram needed to hear “This is not hard.” We’ll soon find out that a 90 year old woman is going to be pregnant. It would be a God Who is **Almighty** to do these things that don’t occur every day.

By the way, two other people have changes of names in this chapter: Abram (17:5) & Sarai (17:15). As seen in 16:11, we see that there really are stories in a name.

walk before Me as Enoch did [and did not die (5:21)]. **and be blameless.** As did Noah (6:8-9), and Abraham must do it thematically, with God’s grace found there. The implication is that **Abram** has not been so **walking**.

2 And I will make My covenant used 10 times in this chapter.

17:3

Then Abram fell on his face, When you see verse 17, we realize that this happened regularly.

a father of many nations. Galatians 3:8 tells us that this along with Genesis 12:1-4 are intended to preach what Paul called the Gospel (Galatians 1:8-9; 3:8).

17:11

and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the

¹17 when he dreams; 39 when he sees fulfillment.

²In post resurrection Christology, we have a Jesus Whose wounds are in His hands. Even in Revelation 5, we have a “Lamb as it has been slaughtered” standing in the midst of the elders before the throne. Why do they bow to Him? Revelation 5:9 says it is because “He has redeemed us by His blood out of every kindred, people, tribe, and nation.” It is a Christian reality to worship God for what He has done through Christ.

covenant We have **signs** of the New **covenant** in baptism and the Lord's Supper and we are reminded that the strength of the **covenant** is not the strength of it.