

Genesis Chapter 17

Ge 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.**

In the previous verse Abram was 86. This would mean 13 years passed before God spoke to Abram again. Perhaps this is because Abram attempted to help God out by conceiving Ishmael. This might explain God's stern greeting. It is plausible to assume that Abram had drifted during those 13 years (number of rebellion) and needed a reprimand. Second to that, God may simply have been waiting to further test Abram's faith. Abram and Sarai were far beyond childbearing years which would require complete faith for a son. **Side note:** The ninth word of verse one is the number 9. The reference is 17:1 or 1+7+1=9 or 17+1=18 which is 9+9. Abram is 99 and Sarai is 90. Nine is the number of fruitfulness in the bible. God can do anything, including to allow a 90 year old woman to bear a child.

While we're talking numbers, let's get back to the number 13. Ishmael is associated with 13. A prime example is found in **Ge 17:25** And Ishmael his son was **thirteen** years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. This is the first time the word thirteen occurs in the bible and it's in reference to Ishmael. (*Thirteen is the number of rebellion and wicked sinners as seen in Gen.13:13 which has 13 words in the verse. This is also the first time the word sinner shows up in the Bible.*) **Gen.17:25** has 18 words = 6+6+6. The word thirteen is the sixth word of the verse. Six is the number of man (see Rom.6:6). It is a **bad combo** when 6 and 13 show up together. Notice also **Ge 21:13** And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. There are also 18 words (6+6+6) in this 13th verse. Who else is associated with 6 and 13? Satan. Look at **Rev.13:18** (6+6+6) Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is **Six hundred threescore and six.**

Ge 17:2-22 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

This is the fifth time that God has promised to give the land of Palestine to the descendants of Abraham. However, Ishmael is not included in this covenant. He was born after the flesh (**Gal.4:23**) and was not the child of promise (**Gal.4:28**). God recognized Isaac as Abraham's **only** son (**Gen.22:2**). Muslims take issue with this and claim that since the nation of Israel has broken God's covenant (**Isa.43:28, Mat.23:37, 21:43**), God is working now through Ishmael. Thus, they lay claim to Palestine. They also reference **Deut. 21:15-17**. According to Muslim tradition, Ishmael is regarded as an ancestor of Muhammad and thereby founded a great nation (as promised by God in (**Gen.17:20**). In doing so they overlook **Gen.17:19** which demands that Sarai be the mother and the covenant is with Isaac. See also **Gal.4:28-31**. Furthermore, Abraham pleaded on behalf of Ishmael, but God refused him (**Gen.17:18**).

Ge 17:23-27 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.

The sign of this covenant was circumcision. It was a "seal of the righteousness of the faith" which Abraham had (**Rom.4:11**). **Acts 7:8** refers to it as "the covenant of circumcision". This circumcision was "in the flesh" (**Gen.17:13**) and was, therefore, physical. It is important to realize that the blessings of Israel are physical and the blessings of born again believers are spiritual. Physical circumcision is done away with in Christ (**Acts 15:5-11, Rom.7:18, Gal.2:3-4, 5:1-4**). Ultimately, God desires circumcision of the heart (**Rom.2:28-29**), even for the Jew (**Deu.30:6**).

But how is circumcision of the heart (spiritual circumcision) accomplished? Almost every denomination and theologian stand in agreement that N.T. water baptism is the continuation of O.T. circumcision.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary: Regarding **Deu.30:6** - ...Here he teaches them the true and spiritual meaning of that rite, as was afterwards more strongly urged by Paul (**Ro 2:25,29**), and should be **applied by us to our baptism**, which is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" [**1Pe 3:21**].

Comment on Gen. 17:10 - This was the sign in the Old Testament Church as **baptism is in the New**, and hence the covenant is called "covenant of circumcision" (**Ac 7:8; Ro 4:11**). The terms of the covenant were these: on the one hand Abraham and his seed were to observe the right of circumcision; and on the other, God promised, in the event of such observance, to give them Canaan for a perpetual possession, to be a God to him and his posterity, and that in him and his seed all nations should be blessed.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible: The grounds on which circumcision was imposed as essential by the Law are the same as those on which **Baptism is required in the Gospel**. The latter in the N.T. is strictly analogous to the former under the Old.

Pulpit Commentary: The rite of circumcision, as the initiatory rite of the covenant, taught that man, in his natural, unpurified state, is unfit for fellowship with God. "In us, that is, in our flesh, dwells no good thing" [**Joh 3:6; Ro 7:18**] It was a symbol of the putting away of "the filth of the flesh"—**a truth now signified in baptism** [**Col 2:11; 1Pe 3:21**]

John Wesley's Notes on the Bible: Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, for all things by the law were purged with blood, [Heb 9:22](#). See [Ex 24:8](#). But the blood of Christ being shed, all bloody ordinances are now abolished. **Circumcision therefore gives way to baptism.**

Matthew Henry: As the land of Canaan was secured to the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, so heaven is secured to all his spiritual seed, by a covenant, and for a possession, truly everlasting. The offer of this eternal life is made in the word, **and confirmed by the sacraments**, to all that are under the external administration of the covenant; and the earnest of it is given to all believers, [Eph 1:14](#).

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Biblical Illustrator: To Israel this covenant was an outward sign that God would give them rest in Canaan; and to all of us it is a sign **continued in Christian baptism.**

This is why most denominations invite people to be baptized, including babies. Their belief is that water baptism is a sacrament and brings the individual into a covenant relationship with God. In the case of a child, some teach it protects until the age of accountability, while others say it cleanses from original sin. Most teach it as an essential component of salvation.

Their famous proof text is [Col 2:11-12](#) *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the **circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism**, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* They conclude that water baptism is equivalent to O.T. circumcision.

This errant teaching is the result of two violations of basic bible study.

First, one must rightly divide the word of truth ([2Tim.2:15](#)) and realize that, in this age, we are not in a covenant relationship with God but are rather under a "New Testament" ([Heb.9:16](#)).

Paul said we are "[ministers of the new testament](#)", [2Cor.3:6](#)

He also said that the covenants belong to Israel in [Ro 9:4](#) *Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, **and the covenants**, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;*

Furthermore, Paul declared in [1Co 1:17](#) *For Christ sent me **not to baptize, but to preach the gospel**: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

Second, one must let the bible define itself ([1Cor.2:13](#)). Jesus himself said, "[For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.](#)" [Ac 1:5](#). From this verse and others, we understand that baptism has more than one definition in scripture. But Paul declares there is only one baptism for this age ([Eph.4:5](#).) which can be none other than spirit baptism ([1Cor.12:13](#), [Eph.1:13](#)).

There's nothing like a King James Bible to clear up the false doctrines of the commentators, theologians, and false denominations!