

1. TORAH, GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS
GENESIS 17 - THE COVENANT REPEATED, SARAH'S BLESSING
GENESIS 18 - SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Say - This chapter we never want to forget for it is the covenant repeated between God and Abraham. This is thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael.

¹And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God (El-Shaddai and means breast, God which sustaineth or supplies all our needs. The Bible tells us, "And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (El- Shaddai)" I Corinthians 6:18); walk before me (continue to walk with Me), and be thou perfect. (The first step for Abraham is to come to terms with the covenant or agreement with God. The word "perfect" means to be innocent or blameless of sin through repentance.)

²And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly (means greatly, Abraham at this point still thinks it will be Ishmael).

³And Abram fell on his face: and God (Elohim, the Creator, Jesus Christ) talked with him, saying,

⁴As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

⁵Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram (meant exalted Father), but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee (notice how God said this in past tense as though it is).

⁶And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee (Abraham was the progenitor or forefather of the 12 tribes of Israel, Ishmaelites, Midianites and Arabians).

Say - Many religions think this covenant ended when Jesus died, but it is as God said, "everlasting".

⁷And 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 (This is "the promise" of the covenant or agreement and it would be passed on to Isaac, Jacob, Ephraim and Manasseh and every generation of them until the end of time).

⁸And 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. (even beyond the physical or flesh but the spiritual for in Hebrews 11 we read Abraham has not seen the spiritual yet for the Bible tells us, "These all died in the faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off and

were persuaded or assured of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth (just like God's people today), Hebrews 11:13). (Here is more the Bible tells us about Abraham, "8By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange (foreign) country, dwelling in tabernacles (temporary dwellings) with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (The Heavenly Jerusalem will descend after 1100 years to the earth; this is the ultimate promise which lies within God's people, remember Canaan only symbolized it, Hebrews 11:8-10.).

Say - Back to Genesis 17,

9And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations (Abraham's seed or descendants would number in the hundreds of millions).

10This is my covenant (not a covenant or agreement of the Jews or Moses or any man but MINE), which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised (circumcision is part of the covenant). Why did God want them to be circumcised, read the next verse.

11And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token (a sign, a distinguishing mark) of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12And 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 (God does not want anyone uncircumcised in His land; anyone who was going to be part of the reward must be circumcised in the flesh and in the heart/mind).

13He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money (your family and your slaves), must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul (soul is "nephesh" in Hebrew and means person) shall be cut off from his people; (why?) he hath broken my covenant.

15And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai (meant princely), but Sarah (my princess) shall her name be.

16And 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.

¹⁷Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed (for joy), 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?

¹⁸And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee (thinking that he might die, yet showing his faith in Isaac's birth)!

¹⁹And 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.

²⁰And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee (Abraham's prayers that Ishmael "live before 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.

²¹But my covenant will I establish with Isaac (means laughter), which Sarah (not Hagar) shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

²²And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

²³And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house (family and slaves), 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 (Notice how Abraham obeyed immediately, did not argue; everyone who was circumcised for Abraham was wholehearted with God).

²⁴And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

²⁵And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old (in contrast, Isaac was circumcised on the 8th day as God's Law says), when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

²⁶In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

²⁷And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

Say - Below is the Church of God doctrine on circumcision.

SUBJECT: Circumcision

QUESTION: Is circumcision necessary?

ANSWER:

Many wonder when they read Genesis 17:10 whether circumcision is necessary: "Every man child among you shall be circumcised." The ordinance of circumcision was an outward, physical sign of one's willingness to obey God and be one of God's chosen people.

Under the new covenant, God is calling a spiritual nation composed of individuals converted and begotten by His Holy Spirit. God's people now are all to be "circumcised" spiritually. Physical circumcision is no longer necessary for religious purposes. It was only a forerunner or type of what God really wanted -- circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4). Notice Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter."

Spiritual circumcision is a process of conversion. That Christ circumcises us spiritually is made plain in Colossians 2:10-11: "Ye are complete in him [Christ], which is the head of all principality and power: 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.

That is why the assembled apostles and elders of the New Testament Church declared circumcision to be one of the physical requirements of the Old Testament which is not necessary for Christians (Acts 15:24, 28).

It is for entirely nonreligious reasons that many physicians recommend physical circumcision by a competent surgeon. It is to promote cleanliness and health.

Following is an excerpt from our Doctrinal Statement on the Law regarding circumcision:

Circumcision: One of the laws regarding which the Old Testament is very clear is that of circumcision. Circumcision was instituted as a sign of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17). It was a sign of the covenant with God and of the Israelites' national identity. It made the newborn boy a part of the community. It was, in a sense, an initiation rite since any male of whatever age was required to undergo it to become a part of Israel. Therefore, it is not surprising that circumcision became an important issue in the early Church (Acts 10-11; 15).

Christians do not consider physical circumcision as a requirement for entry into the spiritual community of Israel, the Church. The reason is that the New Testament makes it clear that the only circumcision that is required is spiritual circumcision of the heart and mind. The question had already been debated and settled in the early Church (Acts 10-11; 15; Gal. 5:2-12). While one could voluntarily undergo circumcision, it was not a requirement for membership in the body of Christ. To reiterate, the only required circumcision is spiritual circumcision—circumcision of the heart and mind.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Church rejected all physical rituals. Baptism was taught as a physical ceremony. The symbolism of baptism is that of death followed by resurrection to a new life. It is a voluntary act requiring active, conscious repentance on the part of the mature individual, whereas circumcision is an involuntary act carried out on the unknowing babe in arms.

GENESIS 18 - SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Say - In Genesis 18:1-3 below, three men visited Abraham, one is Elohim and the other two are angels. The Bible tells us to be hospitable to visitors or to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

¹And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

²And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him (one was Elohim, the other two were angels): and when he saw them, he ran to meet them

from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground (Abraham was being hospitable or kind and we will read more of how Abraham treated them in the following verses),

³And said, My LORD, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

⁴Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree (this was a common practice because of the dust, bare feet and sandals):

⁵And I will fetch a morsel of bread (meaning food in general), and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

⁶And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth (probably unleavened).

⁷And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it (more hospitality, we are to share what we have. God is the head of the family and He wants to eat with us.).

⁸And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat (Remember God called His religion, "the way" and "His Way" is the way we are to walk in not Christianity, Judaism or Buddhism, etc. The Master, Christ served them; had a foot-washing attitude as we are too also. God tells us "²⁶But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

²⁷For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I (Christ) am among you as he that serveth" Luke 22:26-27 Also "³⁷Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" Luke 12:37 and this is what how we should learn to serve and care for one another).

⁹And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

¹⁰And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him (Sarah was listening).

¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women (after the age of menstruation).

¹²Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

¹³And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

¹⁴Is any thing too hard (difficult) for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

¹⁵Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid (must overcome our fears for then our trust is not in God). And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

¹⁶And the men rose up from thence (one was Christ), and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way (Abraham walked with them a little ways and shows the friendship he had with them).

¹⁷And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

¹⁸Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

¹⁹For I know him (I know Abraham's actions, thoughts, his obedience and the question is, do we know Him?), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment (righteousness); that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

²⁰And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

²¹I will go down now (will go down Himself to see first hand what the people are like), and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

²²And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD (the two "men"/angels left but Jehovah/Christ remained).

²³And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

²⁴Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein (Abraham is probably thinking of Lot's family)?

²⁵That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

²⁶And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

²⁷And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes (I am nobody):

²⁸Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

²⁹And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake (Do you see it's not the question of how many; it has to do with are they righteous).

³⁰And he said unto him, Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there (Abraham still bargaining).

³¹And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

³²And he said, Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake (this is the same as Matthew 24, will save the entire world because of His people, His Bride; we will be like Abraham and pray for the deliverance for children of mercy we are to be).

³³And the LORD went his way (went up to the Heaven of Heavens), as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

MEMORY VERSE

And he said, I will certainly return unto thee
according to the time of life; and, lo,
Sarah thy wife shall have a son.
Genesis 18:10

BELOW IS THE SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON FOR TOTS

SARAH'S BLESSING

GOD SAID, "WHERE IS SARAH THY WIFE"?
ABRAHAM ANSWERED, "SHE IS IN THE TENT".
GOD SAID, "I WILL RETURN UNTO THEE AND SARAH
THY WIFE SHALL HAVE A SON".

"I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH HIM FOR
AN EVERLASTING COVENANT"; GENESIS 17:19
ABRAHAM AND SARAH WERE OF A GREAT OLD AGE,
SARAH WAS 90 AND ABRAHAM WAS 100,
THEREFORE SARAH LAUGHED. GENESIS 17:17

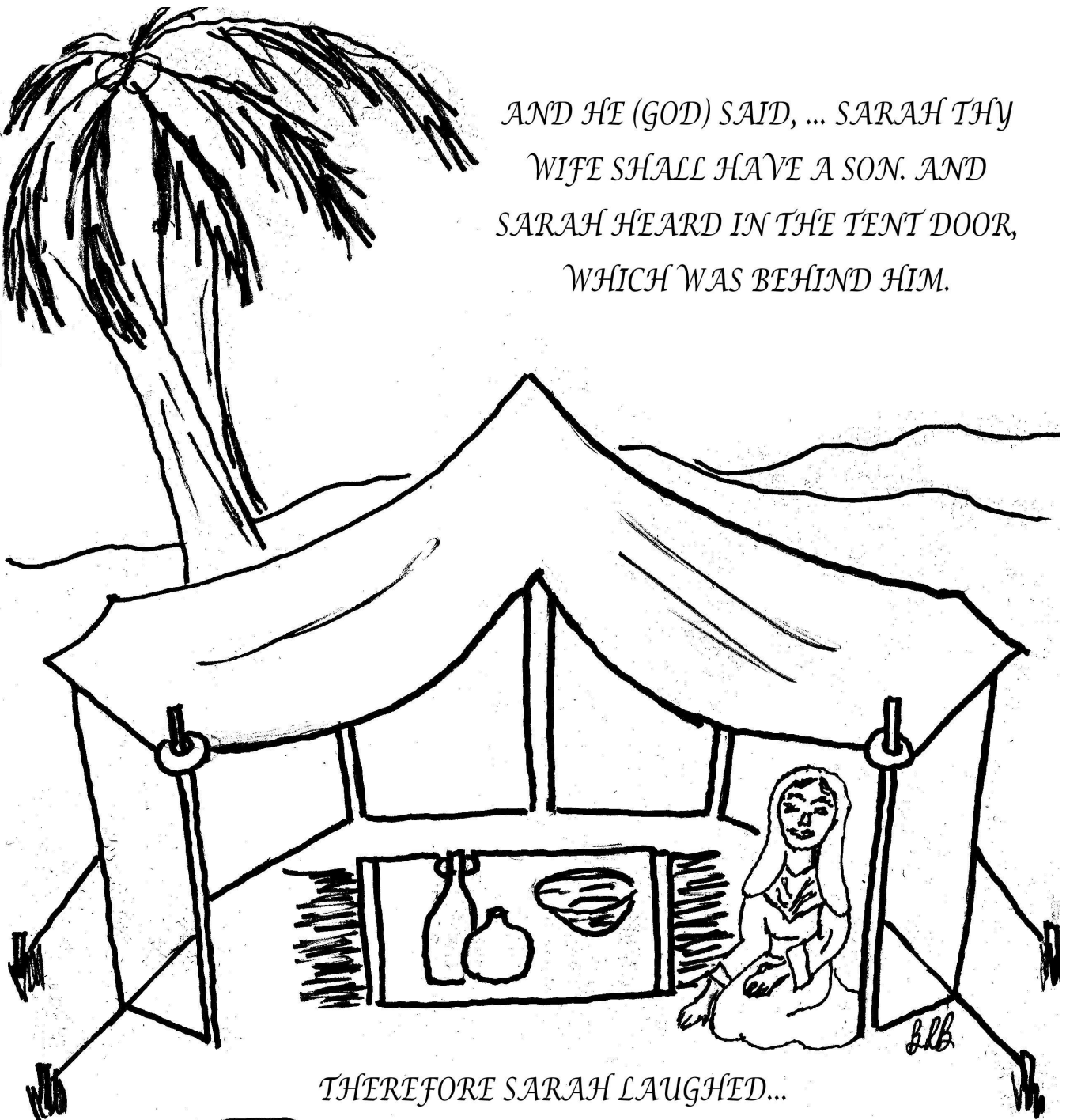
AND GOD SAID, "WHY DID SARAH LAUGH, IS THERE
ANYTHING TOO DIFFICULT FOR THE LORD",
FOR WITH GOD NOTHING SHALL BE
IMPOSSIBLE"; LUKE 1:37

THE BIBLE TELLS US, "GOD HAS MADE THE HEAVEN
AND THE EARTH BY HIS GREAT POWER AND
THERE IS NOTHING TOO DIFFICULT FOR
HIM". JEREMIAH 32:17

JUST AS ABRAHAM WAS A "FATHER OF A
NATIONS", SARAH WOULD BE A "MOTHER OF
NATIONS"; GENESIS 17:16

YES, SARAH WOULD HAVE A SON AND HIS NAME
WOULD BE ISAAC WHICH MEANS LAUGHTER.

*AND HE (GOD) SAID, ... SARAH THY
WIFE SHALL HAVE A SON. AND
SARAH HEARD IN THE TENT DOOR,
WHICH WAS BEHIND HIM.*



THEREFORE SARAH LAUGHED...

*IS ANYTHING TOO
HARD FOR
THE LORD?... I WILL RETURN UNTO THEE
AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON.*

GENESIS 18:10, 12, 14