



THIS TIME genesis 17 NEXT YEAR

Sooke Baptist Church, Sunday, October 16, 2022, 10am  
also on Facebook Live Stream and YouTube

03:00

Coffee/Question:  
“With God all things  
are possible.”  
Why and how do you know that is true?

**Read v.1-2.**

From the end of chapter 16 to chapter 17 thirteen years have passed by. It's now been twenty-four years since Abram and Sarai had left Harran; twenty-four years since God had spoken this promise to them...

Genesis 12:1-3

“Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

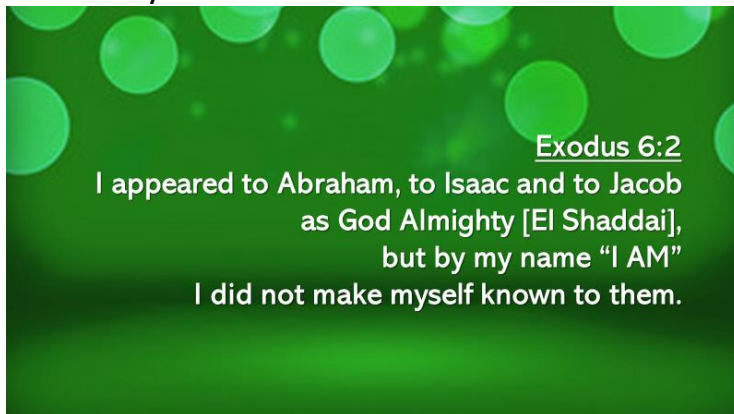
In Genesis 17, Abram is now ninety-nine years old.  
This detail is important because it is restated again in v.24.

The things God had promised to do in the lives of Abram and Sarai had now passed from being possible... to impossible; from something that could be realized naturally, to something that could only happen... supernaturally.

v.1b – the LORD appeared to Abram, and he spoke to him, saying to him,  
v.1c - “I am God Almighty,” which in the Hebrew language is, “I am El Shaddai.”



El Shaddai is the name God primarily used with his people in the book of Genesis. But in the book of Exodus, when God spoke with Moses, Exodus 6:2, he identified himself by another name...



What does this say to us?

In the time of the OT God progressively revealed himself to those who walked with him... he revealed himself as El Shaddai to Abram... and then he revealed himself to Moses as I AM... and then to still others in later generations he revealed himself as...

# JEHOVAH

*Jireh*-the Lord my Provider  
*Rapha*-the Lord my Healer  
*Nissi*-the Lord my Banner  
*M'Kaddesh*-the Lord who Sanctifies  
*Shalom*-the Lord my Peace  
*Rohi*-the Lord my Shepherd  
*Tsidkenu*-the Lord my Righteousness  
*Shammah*-the Lord is Present

Through the names by which he revealed himself in the OT, God made known to his people who he is.

His ultimate and final revelation was in Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh.

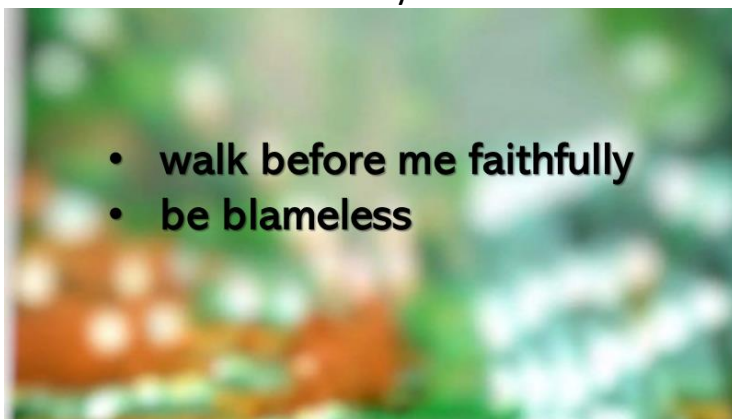
To a ninety-nine year old man named Abram, who was married to an eighty-nine year old woman named Sarai, who had been waiting for the LORD to enable them to have a child which he had promised they would have, but for whom the time to conceive and bear children had passed, the appearance of El Shaddai and his assurance to them, that the promise was about to be fulfilled... brought Abram to his knees.

El Shaddai... the all-sufficient God, for whom nothing is impossible, had the power to enable this couple... who were past the age to have a child...to have a child.

Who God revealed himself to be – El Shaddai – was inseparably linked to what he asked of Abram.

Look at v.1d.

– walk before me faithfully and be blameless.



### **What does it mean to walk faithfully before the LORD?**

It means to center one's life in God's presence, his promises and his commands. It means to live in the awareness that God sees and knows and hears all things. It means to be devoted exclusively to God.

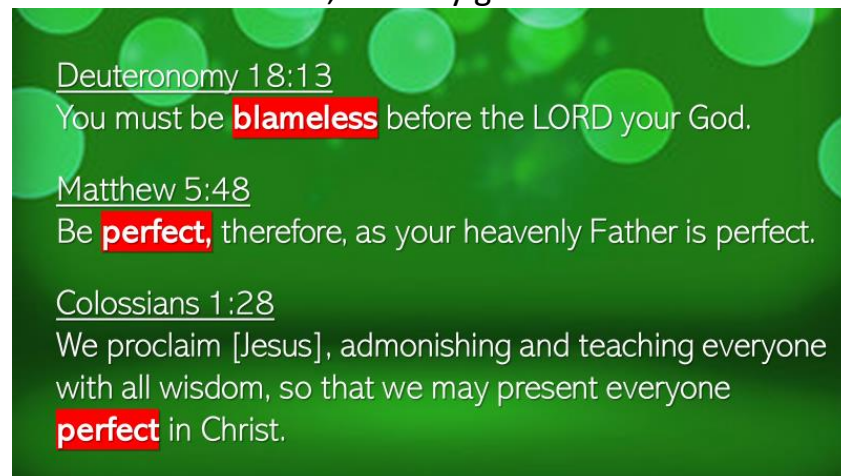
### **What does it mean to be blameless?**

It means to be without fault.

It means to wholeheartedly do what is good and right in God's eyes.

It means to live with integrity; to be completely upright.

El Shaddai ...the Almighty God... who is all-sufficient... has required this of all who would walk with him, in every generation.



- To the descendants of Abraham, the LORD through Moses said... Deuteronomy 18:13...
- To those who would follow him, Jesus said...Matthew 5:48...
- Paul to the church at Colossae, wrote of the commission God had given to him...Colossians 1:28....

The LORD had assumed all the obligations for the fulfilling of the covenant that he had made with Abram in chapter 15... remember.... only God walked through the animals which had been in cut in two.... but here in chapter 17 Abram is commanded by God to walk before him and be blameless.

What God required of Abram was his obedience.

I believed in his earlier interactions with Abram this was always assumed.

But now God very specifically states it.

Look at v.3a.



This response by Abram communicated, not only reverence towards El Shaddai, but his submission to him.

It expressed his resolve to obey God... even before God provided the specifics of what he wanted of him.

This is what it means to be in a covenant relationship with the LORD.  
This is how obedience works.



The closest example we have of this commitment to God... is the making of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God.

A couple makes promises to each other... in trust of the LORD that he will enable them to keep the promises they make to each other regardless of the circumstances they will encounter... better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do them part.

Whether it be in marriage... or following Jesus... the grace of El Shaddai – the One who is all sufficient... is enough for each day.

Genesis 17:4a  
**“As for me...”**

**Read v.3b-8.**

The LORD restated the promises he had previously made. As he did so, it was impressed upon Abram that the passing of the years, 24 to be exact, and the aging of his and Sarai’s bodies did not change the promises, because they rested upon... El Shaddai, not Abram and Sarai.

But several new things were added.

**Look again at v.5.**

God changed Abram’s name.

Allen Ross writes about this, saying, “Firstly, for a person to change another’s name expressed lordship over the one whose name is changed.

Secondly, a change of name usually meant a change in a person’s status or circumstances.” p.327.

The name Abram meant “exalted father.”



The name Abraham meant “the father of a multitude.”



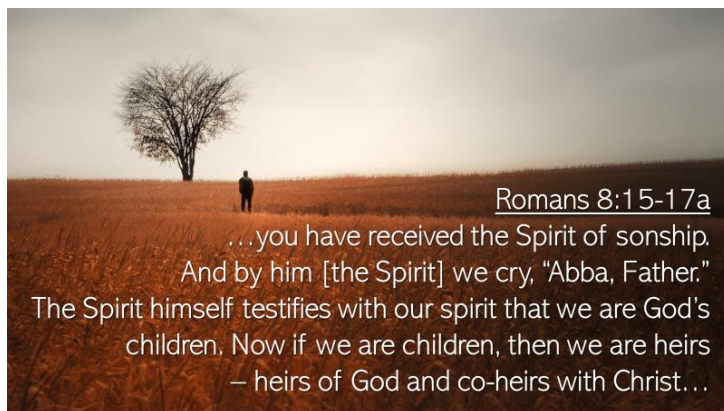
Do you realize that God changed Abram's name, not after he and Sarai had a son, but before they did... before the promise became a reality?

This impressed upon Abram as it does us, that the LORD who lives in eternity, not only sees the end from the beginning, but that he announces in advance the things he purposes to do... and they come to pass... because... it is he who directs history to bring about his good will.

**What God says he will do, he does... always.**

The LORD does the same thing with you and me.

When Jesus' sacrifice is appropriated, when he is believed in and received, the Father says that we become his adopted children... which means we become his heirs ...



As an heir, all that is the LORD's, is ours.

God the Spirit has announced this to us in advance, even though we do not yet possess all that we will in the time of the new heaven and the new earth.

But there is no doubt, no question... it will come to pass... this promise will be fulfilled... because this is who God is.

As the LORD restated his promises to Abram... El Shaddai very purposefully used the word everlasting.

**Genesis 17:7,8**  
**“everlasting”**

**Look at v.7** – everlasting covenant.

**Look at v.8** – everlasting possession.

What did God's use of the word "everlasting" say to Abram?

That God's covenant with him would not expire when Abraham died.... that this covenant... included his descendants.

The use of the word 'everlasting' also impressed upon Abram that his faith was to be passed on to his descendants.

It was a faith to be taught... then embraced... and lived by each succeeding generation.

For those of us who walk with God in this present time... the greatest gift we give our children is the opportunity to know God and to receive him and to believe in him.

Of all the things we do for our children, this is the most important.

This is the one thing we must not cut corners on; the one thing we cannot afford to be too busy to do.

Our children are being evangelized.

The question before you and me... is by whom.

How do we pass our faith on?

One day at a time, where, as Deuteronomy 6 teaches, we talk about the LORD each day throughout the day; where, we instill and build spiritual habits in our children, and so impress upon them the priority of the LORD in every facet of our life.

As El Shaddai spoke with Abraham, he asked him to do something.

This "something" was to serve as a sign of the covenant.





With Noah God had provided a sign that would serve as an ongoing reminder of his covenant with him. You can read of this sign in Genesis 9.

The “something” Abraham was commanded to do... did not earn him favor with God nor increase the righteousness that the LORD had granted to him.

**Genesis 17:9a**  
**“As for you...”**

**Look at v.9-14.**

The sign of circumcision was to remind Abraham and his descendants... whose they were – they were in relationship with El Shaddai; they belonged to him, and El Shaddai had committed himself to them... to be their God.

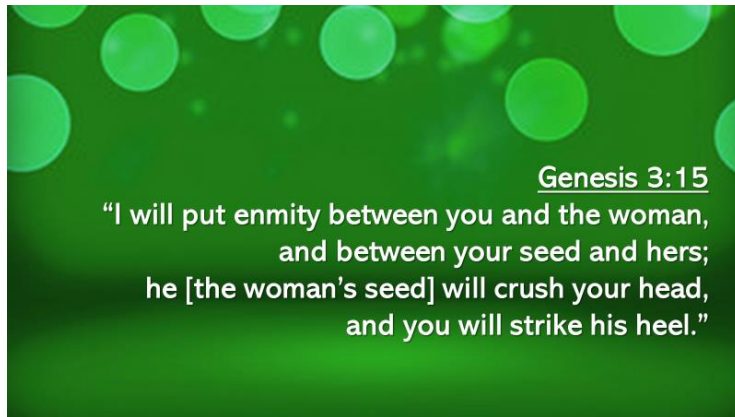
In that day and time, the practice of circumcision was not something new. What El Shaddai did was infuse this act... with great spiritual meaning.

By why cut off the foreskin of the male sexual organ?

It had everything to do with God’s promise of a seed.

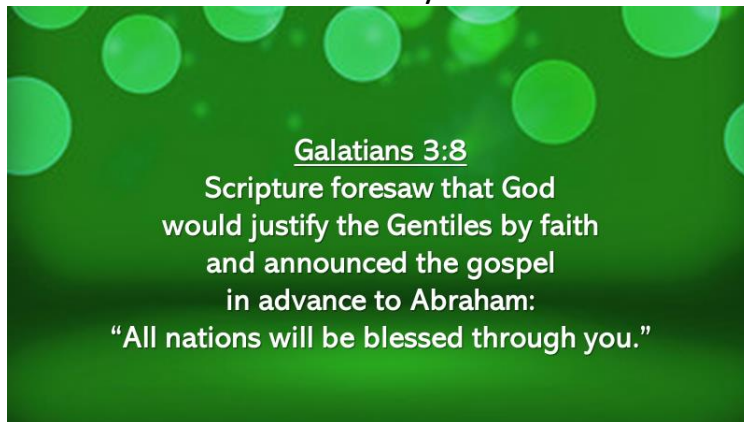
Let me explain.

After Satan deceived Eve and Adam, the LORD pronounced judgement upon him, Genesis 3:15...



Long after that historical event... the gospel was announced in advance even though Abraham did not fully grasp the world changing significance of what God promised him.

Look at what Galatians 3 says.



The seed (singular) of Eve, and the offspring (singular) of Abraham... spoke of the same person... the promised Rescuer... he would bring blessing to all nations... and he would crush Satan.

In the case of Abraham and the covenant which God had made with him ... the sign of circumcision would be the reminder... that God's promise of an heir for Abraham through whom would be the lineage of the Rescuer... by which all nations would be blessed... was not something Abraham or any of his descendants could bring about by natural means.

Let me explain.

Here we see the amazing wisdom of God.

Ishmael had been born to Abram by natural means.

Look at Galatians 4:22-23.

Galatians 4:22-23

For it is written that Abraham had two sons,  
one by the slave woman  
and the other by the free woman.  
His son by the slave woman was born  
according to the flesh,  
but his son by the free woman was born  
as the result of a promise.

Regarding the child to be born to Sarai, Abraham had his part to play – the seed came from his body... Abram and Sarai were intimate with one another.

But Sarai conceived because God miraculously enabled her to ovulate; El Shaddai brought her womb to life so that it could receive and nourish the fertilized embryo.

Again, the book of Galatians gives understanding of how the LORD was involved in the birth of Isaac.

Galatians 4:28-29

[The child of promise]  
was born by the power of the Spirit.  
It is the same now.

In the case of God's promised Rescuer, his birth too was miraculous. However, in his case, the seed came not from a man, but from God and was placed by... **the power of the Spirit**... into Mary whose womb was fertile.

"It is the same now.

This truth statement explains both the necessity and wonder of the new birth.

But first let's address the spiritual reality behind circumcision of the body for it testified to a miraculous work done by God.

The practice of God has been... to provide his people with specific sign... spiritual acts that demonstrate unshakeable truths.

Since Jesus' ascension, his people have two primary signs.

- **Believer's baptism**
- **The table of the Lord**

### **Believer's baptism.**

The placing of a person under water and then lifting them out... acts out a deeper spiritual reality that has already happened.

What it represents is how a person who dead to God was made alive spiritually by the power of the Spirit.... by grace through faith in Christ alone.

The sign is important...

(1) because Jesus says it is important...

(2) because it is how a person declares in a public way their commitment to Jesus; it is how one announce that they belong to the LORD – body, soul and spirit.

### **The table of the LORD.**

We eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of Jesus.

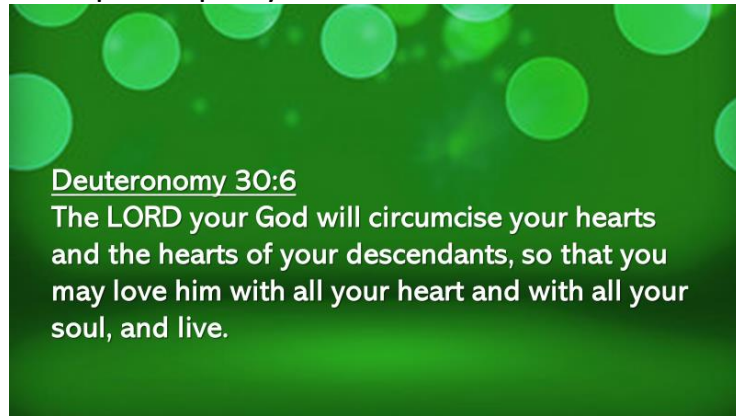
But doing so points the followers of Jesus to something beyond the physical bread and the juice in the cup.

It points us to our Savior who spoke of himself as being the bread of life who satisfies the hunger and the thirst of the human soul.

We consume the elements of the LORD's table, that is, we take them into our bodies, just as we have received Jesus into our heart and soul; into our inner person.

This act reminds us of whose we are and how our precious Savior sustains, not just our physical bodies, but our spiritual being... he satisfies and nourishes us.

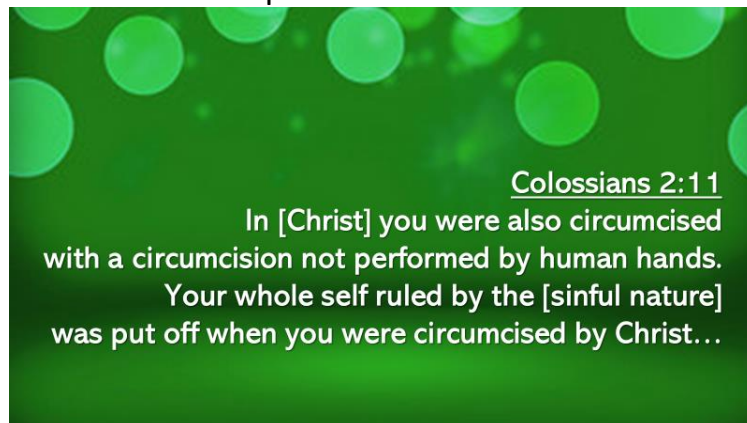
What was the greater truth behind the act of physical circumcision?  
The necessity for the circumcision of the heart.  
God spoke openly of this to Abraham's descendants.



The human heart needs to be circumcised by God because sin has invaded our human nature.

It is sin within that causes us to not love God; to not value him as precious.  
Separated from God brings death, not life.  
This is why God in mercy and with great love pursues after us – in order that we might live!

Colossians 2:11 speaks of this miracle of love...



What is put off when a follower of Jesus is spiritually circumcised?  
The self that was ruled by the sinful nature.

But God doesn't just remove our old self.  
He does so much more.  
At the very same time, he creates in us a new nature.  
This is what is meant by being born again by the power of the Spirit.

**Genesis 1:2**  
**...and the Spirit of God was hovering**  
**over the waters.**

The same Spirit who hovered over the face of the earth and from whom all life on earth was birthed, is the agent who births a new nature... that is like that of Jesus Christ ... in those who believe in and receive him.

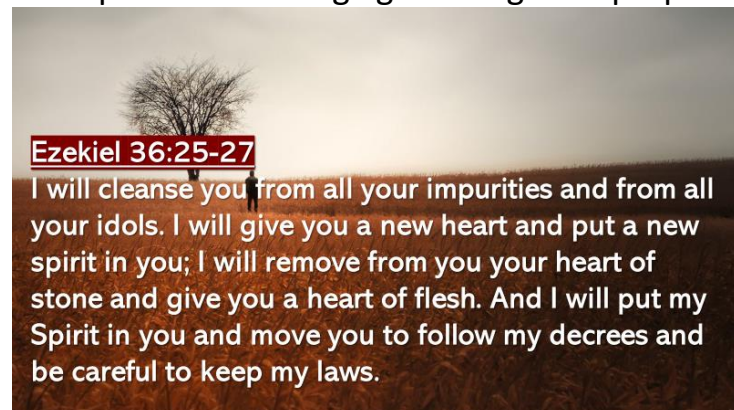
The circumcision of the heart, and the birthing of a new nature is not something we can do for ourselves; or achieve by our own means.

Only El Shaddai ... who spoke life into Sarai's dead womb, can speak life into a dead soul.

El Shaddai who asked Abraham and his descendants to bear in their bodies the sign of circumcision, is the same God who cuts away in the one who repents and turns in faith to Jesus.... the old self that was controlled and energized by the sin nature.

The followers of Jesus bear in their spirit and soul the mark of God that testifies they belong to God.

God spoke of this long ago through the prophet Ezekiel, 36:25-27



This theme of new life from God permeates the Scriptures.  
The gospel of John, 1:12-13...

But to as many as did receive and welcome him,  
he gave the right [the authority, the privilege]  
to become children of God, that is, to those who believe in  
his name [adhere to, trust in, and rely on]  
– who were born, not of blood [natural conception],  
nor of the will of the flesh [physical impulse],  
nor of the will of man [that of a natural father],  
but of God [that is, a divine supernatural birth].

John 1:12-13

My four children are born from myself and Barb.  
Their life came from us.

Now please listen carefully... a follower of Jesus is born of God.  
It cannot be any other way.

This is the confirmation of 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15.



Without faith in the LORD, all the signs he gives are of no value.  
Without faith... circumcision was an empty ritual.  
Without faith in the LORD... baptism is an empty ritual.  
Without faith in the LORD... participating in his table is an empty ritual.

These things in and of themselves do not save.  
They simply testify to a reality that already exists because of the power of God.

Followers of Jesus we walk with God because of his amazing, supernatural grace and power.

The life we now live in the body, we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us.

This is the blessing of those... who walk with God.

This is the truth of who we are... in Jesus Christ.

We are his – we have been bought at a great price – the life blood of Jesus.

You and I are not our own.

We belong to him.

This is the good news of Jesus.

This is his invitation to all who are here

- come to me and find rest of soul
- come to me and be born of my Spirit
- come to me and find in me satisfaction of soul
- come to me and live.

On his behalf, I invite you to come to him this morning.

Find in him encouragement to keep pursuing after him.

Find in him salvation for your soul.