

Abraham & Sarah

Genesis 17-18

When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him. He said, "I am the Mighty God. Walk with me and live without any blame. I will now put into practice my covenant between me and you. I will greatly increase your numbers."

Abram fell with his face to the ground. God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you. You will be the father of many nations.

"You will not be called Abram anymore. Your name will be Abraham, because I have made you a father of many nations. I will give you many children. Nations will come from you. And kings will come from you.

"I will make my covenant with you. It will last forever. It will be between me and you and your children after you for all time to come. I will be your God. And I will be the God of all of your family after you.

"You are now living in Canaan as an outsider. But I will give you the whole land of Canaan. You will own it forever. So will your children after you. And I will be their God."

Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant. You and your children after you for all time to come must keep it.

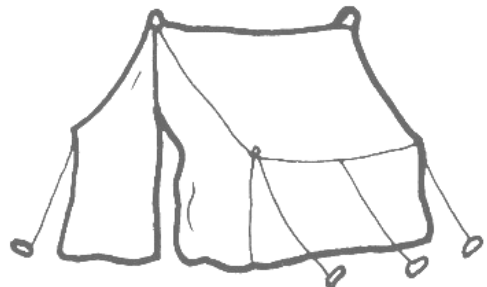
"Here is my covenant that you and your children after you must keep. Every male among you must be circumcised. You must be circumcised. That will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. It must be done for all time to come.

"Every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised. That includes those who are born in your house. It also includes those who are bought with money from a stranger. Even those who are not your own children must be included. Any male who is born in your house or bought with your money must be circumcised.

"My covenant will last forever. Your body will have the mark of my covenant on it.

"Any male who has not been circumcised will be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant."

God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, do not call her Sarai anymore. Her name will be Sarah. I will give her my blessing. You can be sure that I will



give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations. Kings of nations will come from her."

Abraham fell with his face to the ground. He laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man who is 100 years old? Will Sarah have a child at the age of 90?"

Then God said, "But your wife Sarah will have a son by you. And you will name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him. It will be a covenant that lasts forever. It will be for Isaac and for his family after him.

"I will establish my covenant with Isaac. By this time next year, Sarah will have a son by you."

When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God left him.

The Lord appeared to Abraham near the large trees of Mamre. Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent. It was the hottest time of the day.

Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. He quickly left the entrance to his tent to meet them. He bowed low to the ground.

He said, "My lord, if you are pleased with me, don't pass me by. Let a little water be brought. All of you can wash your feet and rest under this tree.

"Let me get you something to eat to give you strength. Then you can go on your way. I want to do this for you now that you have come to me."

"All right," they answered. "Go ahead and do it."

So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick!" he said. "Get about half a bushel of fine flour. Mix it and bake some bread."

Then he ran to the herd. He picked out a choice, tender calf. He gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. Then he brought some butter and milk and the calf that had been prepared. He served them to the three men.

While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

"Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"Over there, in the tent," he said.

Then the Lord said, "You can be sure that I will return to you about this time next year. Your wife Sarah will have a son."

Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old. Sarah was too old to have a baby. So she laughed to herself. She thought, "I'm worn out, and my husband is old. Can I really know the joy of having a baby?"

Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Will I really have a baby, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for me? I will return to you at the appointed time next year. Sarah will have a son."

Sarah was afraid. So she lied and said, "I didn't laugh."

But the Lord said, "Yes, you did."