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Circumcision

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 /1913 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **September 10, 2017**

Genesis 17:1-14

Introduction: Prior to looking at Genesis 17, let's back up to chapters 12, 15 & 16 to see the reason why Yahweh is appearing to Abram.

Genesis 12:1-2, Now the Lord **had said** unto **Abram**, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred ...from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee... **I will make of thee a great nation** ... **I will** bless thee ...**make THY name great** ...thou shalt be a blessing... (*Here, he's about 69 years old: Source: the Reese Chronological Bible*)

Genesis 15:1-6, (*He's about 85; 16 years later. Source: the Reese Chronological Bible*) ...the **word** of the Lord came unto Abram in a **VISION**, saying, Fear NOT, Abram: I am thy shield ...thy exceeding great reward. ...Abram said, Lord God, **what wilt thou give me**, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? ...Behold, to me thou hast given **no seed**: and, lo, one born in my house is mine **heir**. ...the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall **not** be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine **OWN bowels** shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven (*sky*), and tell the **stars**, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall **thy SEED** be. And **he BELIEVED** in the Lord (Yahweh); and **he counted** it to him for **righteousness**.

Hebrews 11:8-9, By 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. By **faith** he **sojourned (be a stranger)** in the **land** of **promise**, as in a **strange** country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same PROMISE...

Thought 1. Paul said that this covenant with Abraham was **430 years BEFORE** the Law was given to Israel. This is in the "Septuagint", his source for study of the scriptures.

Galatians 3:16-18, Now to **Abraham** and **his SEED** were the **promises** made. He saith NOT, And to **seedS**, as of many; but as of **ONE**, And to thy **SEED**, **which is Christ**. And this I say, that the **COVENANT**, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the **law**, which was **four hundred and thirty years AFTER**, cannot **disannul**, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the LAW, it is no more of promise: but God **gave** it to **Abraham** by PROMISE.

(*Septuagint*) **Exodus 12:40**, And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of **EGYPT AND** the land of **CHANAAN**, **four hundred and thirty years**.

(KJV) **Exodus 12:40**, Now the sojourning (live in a place as a stranger) of the children of Israel, who dwelt in **Egypt**, was **four hundred and thirty years**.

Thought 2. Notice the obvious discrepancy between the TWO versions. The KJV, which is translated from the “Masoretic Hebrew”, left out the time Abram spent “sojourning” in the land of **Canaan (Chanaan)**. However, the Septuagint has it.

NOTE: The **Septuagint** was the **FIRST translation** of the **Hebrew Bible**; and was made in the third century B.C. by Jewish scribes, who were direct descendants of those trained in Ezra's Great Synagogue of Jerusalem. They were complete experts in the text, being very well versed in **Hebrew** and **Greek**.

This translation became very popular among Jews in the first TWO centuries before Christ because many Jews in those days did NOT understand Hebrew. Their ancestors had left Israel centuries before, and generation after generation gradually lost the ability to read the Scriptures in Hebrew.

Many of the **Jews** in **Jesus' day** used the **Septuagint** as their **Bible** (book containing the sacred writings belonging to any religion). Quite naturally, the **early Christians** also used the **Septuagint** in their meetings and for personal reading; and many of the New Testament apostles quoted it when they wrote the **Gospels** and **Epistles in Greek**.

...when Jesus quotes the Old Testament in Matthew, He uses the Hebrew text only **10% of the time**, but the **Greek LXX translation — 90% of the time!**

(Source: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/tips/what-bible-did-jesus-use-11638841.html>)

Thought 3. Now, we come to Genesis 16, and ONE more year has gone by.

Genesis 16:5, 16, And **Sarai** said unto **Abram**, **My wrong** be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had **conceived**, I was **despised in her eyes**: the Lord judge between me and thee.

...Abram was **fourscore** and **six years (86)** old, when **Hagar** bare **Ishmael**...

Genesis 17:1-2, And when **Abram** was **ninety years old and nine (99)**, the Lord (Yahweh) **appeared to Abram**, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk **before (with)** me, and be thou **PERFECT**. And I will make **my COVENANT** between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

Perfect defined 8549, without blemish, complete, sincerely, sound, without spot, undefiled (pure and free from moral pollution), **upright** [behaving in a moral or honorable manner].

Covenant defined 1285, a compact [agreement, deal], **covenant** [a solemn agreement that is BINDING on all parties].

Genesis 17:3-6, And Abram fell on his **face**: and God **talked with him**, saying, As for me, behold, **my covenant** is with thee, and thou shalt be a **father of many nations**. Neither shall thy name any more be called **Abram**, but thy name shall be **Abraham**; a **father** of many nations **have I MADE THEE**. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make **nations** of thee, and **kings** shall come out of thee.

Thought 1. It's been 13 years since Ishmael was born. And it's been 30 years since the Lord first spoke to Abram about having seed. (Source: the Reese Chronological Bible)

So, the reason the Lord appears in a vision at this time is to give Abram COMFORT, and to strengthen his faith! He does so by taking advantage of his good understanding of a covenant (solemn binding agreement)! Abram knows it's binding on both parties! This truth DEFEATS the thought, "He didn't have to do it"! Oh yes he did HAVE to!

When you and I obey Yahweh, he has to perform his word! He is bound by his word! But he blesses at his SET time! Therefore the thought "that he didn't have to do it", did not come from God. It came from Satan! In DUE, what he said will be in our hands.

Understanding this truth keeps us in faith, and therefore keeps us from losing hope (an expectancy of good). And HOPE produces PATIENCE, and is also an anchor for our mind (emotions, thoughts, feelings). So, now we have PEACE, COMFORT and REST!

Romans 8:25, But if we **HOPE** (to anticipate, usually with pleasure) for that we SEE not, THEN do we with **patience** (cheerful [or hopeful] endurance [stamina, resolution, strength], **constancy**) WAIT for it.

Hebrews 6:10-19, For God is NOT unrighteous to **forget** your work and labour of LOVE... and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of HOPE unto the end. That ye be **not slothful** (sluggish, LAZY), but **followers** (an imitator) of them who through FAITH and PATIENCE inherit the promises. For when God made PROMISE to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he **SWARE** by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I WILL bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

And so, **after** he had **PATIENTLY** endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all **strife** (dispute, gainsaying [to deny the truth of what somebody says]). Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the **immutability** (**unchangeability** [impossibility to change]) of HIS **counsel** (purpose, will), confirmed it by an **oath**: That by **TWO immutable (unchangeable)** things, in

which it was **IMPOSSIBLE** for **God to lie**, WE might have STRONG **consolation** (comfort), who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the **hope** (expectation) SET before us.

Which **hope** we have as an **ANCHOR** of the **soul** (MIND), both **sure** and stated...

Thought 2. During this vision, the Lord also tells him that his name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham. He continues to explain to Abraham that he has now been MADE the father of many nations. In the SPIRITUAL realm, it has already taken place! Out of REVERENCE for God, Abraham accepts the change of his name, and the PROMISE and the OATH that would help keep his MIND anchored.

Genesis 17:7-9, And 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. And 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. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt KEEP my covenant therefore, thou, and **thy SEED** after thee in their **generations**.

NOTE: ...the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; this respects only the natural seed of Abraham, and those in the line of Isaac and Jacob, to whom this land was given to hold for ever, in case they were obedient to the will of God; and therefore whenever they were **disobedient**, they were carried captive from it, as they are at this day; but when they shall be **converted**, they **will return** to this land and **possess it** to the **end** of the **world**; and which was a figure of the **heavenly inheritance**, which is an ETERNAL ONE, and will be enjoyed by all his SPIRITUAL SEED to all eternity... (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/genesis-17.html>)

Genesis 17:10-11, This is **my COVENANT**, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy SEED after thee; Every man child among you shall **be circumcised**. And ye shall **CIRCUMCISE** (destroy /DO AWAY with, GET RID of) the FLESH of your **foreskin**; and it shall be a token of the **covenant** betwixt me and you.

Thought 1. As we see, when a man is circumcised, ALL of the FLESH of his foreskin is destroyed ([done away with, gotten RID of]. This is pointing to the “cutting away” and complete REMOVAL of the old nature: the “FLESH” from a human’s spirit, when they believe (entrust their spiritual well-being to) Jesus (Yahshua) the Son of Yahweh, who is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. So, a believer has ONLY God’s nature.

Romans 2:28-29, For he is NOT a Jew, which is one **outwardly**; neither is that **circumcision**, which is outward in the **flesh (BODY)**: But he is a Jew, which is one **inwardly**; and **circumcision** is that of the **heart (MIND)**, IN the **SPIRIT**, and NOT in the **letter (writing)**; whose **praise** is NOT of (from) men, but of God.

NOTE: He is NOT a Jew, in the religious sense of one of God's chosen people, who is one outwardly alone.

Neither is that circumcision, the true circumcision, that which **makes** one a member of God's covenanted church, "which is outward in the flesh."

...Circumcision of the heart is a figurative expression for INWARD PURITY, as old as the book of Deuteronomy. **Whose praise is NOT of men.**

...The Jews, especially the Pharisees, were very eager for the praise of MEN, but the true Jew, the real child of **Abraham's by FAITH**, will have what is infinitely better, **the praise of (FROM) God.**

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pnt/romans-2.html>)

1 Corinthians 7:19, Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the KEEPING of the **commandments** of God.

1 John 3:23, And this is **his commandment**, That we should **believe** on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and **LOVE** one another, as he gave us commandment.

NOTE: every MAN child among you shall be circumcised; this was the FIRST institution of circumcision, and it was an institution of God, and NOT of man. Indeed Herodotus says Euterpe sive, 1. 2. c. 104. , that "the **Colchi, Egyptians**, and **Ethiopians** only of all men circumcised from the beginning; and the Phoenicians and Syrians, which are in Palestine, **learnt it** of the Egyptians, as they themselves confess. "So Diodorus Siculus Bibliothec. 1. 4. p. 24. & 1. 3. p. 165. speaks of circumcision as an **Egyptian rite**, and says there are some who make the nation of the Colchi, and of the Jews, to come from the Egyptians: hence he observes, that with these nations there is an ancient tradition to **circumcise** their **newborn infants**, which rite was derived from the Egyptians: but as the original of the Jewish nation is mistaken, so likewise the original this rite. And they may as well be thought to be mistaken in the one as in the other. Those in Palestine that were circumcised were the Jews only, as Josephus Contr Apion. 1. 1. c. 22. observes; but **they did NOT learn this rite from the Egyptians**, NOR do they ever confess it, but on the contrary suggest, that the **Egyptians learnt it from them in the times of Joseph**; for their principal lexicographer says Raal Aruch in Rad. בְּ fol. 91. 1. , the Egyptians were circumcised in the times of Joseph, and when Joseph died they drew over the foreskin of the flesh. The **Colchi** indeed, who were a **colony** of the **Egyptians**, might learn it from them; and so the Ethiopians, who were their neighbours likewise, and agreed with them in many things. Artapanus Apud Euseb. Evangel Praepar. 1. 9. c. 27. p. 433. , an Heathen writer, says, indeed, that the **Ethiopians**, though enemies, had such a **regard for Moses**, that they learned from him the rite of **circumcision**; and NOT only they, but all the priests, that is, in Egypt; and indeed the Egyptian priests only, and NOT the people, were **circumcised**. It is NOT very difficult to account for it, how other nations besides the Jews should receive circumcision, which was first enjoined Abraham and his seed; the **Ishmaelites** had it from **Ishmael** the **son of Abraham**; from them the **old Arabs**; from the Arabs, the Saracens; and from the Saracens, the Turks to this

day: other **Arabian nations**, as the **Midianites**, and others, had it from the **sons** of **Abraham** by **Keturah**; and perhaps the Egyptians and Ethiopians from them, IF the former had it NOT from the Israelites; and the Edomites had it from Edom or Esau, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham; so that all originally had it from Abraham, and he by a **divine command**.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/genesis-17.html>)

Genesis 17:12, *And 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**.*

NOTE: "Scripture gives no reason why circumcision was performed on the eighth day. From a practical standpoint, however, "the important **blood-clotting element, vitamin K**, is NOT formed in normal amount until the fifth to the seventh day of life... It is clear that the first safe day to perform **circumcision** would be the **eighth day**, the very day that Jehovah (Yahweh) commanded Abraham to circumcise Isaac (McMillen, *None of These Diseases*, Revell)". (Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator*, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series)

Genesis 17:13, *He that is **born** in thy house, and he that is **bought** with thy money, must needs be **circumcised**: and my covenant shall be in your **flesh (BODY)** for an **everlasting covenant**.*

NOTE: The children of the strangers, of whom the master of the family was the true domestic owner, were to be circumcised (Genesis 17:12, 13), which looked favourably upon the **Gentiles**, who should in due time be brought into the **family of Abraham**, by **FAITH**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/genesis-17.html>)

Genesis 17:14, *And the **uncircumcised man child** whose **flesh** of his **foreskin** is NOT circumcised, that **soul** shall be CUT OFF from his people; he hath broken my covenant.*

NOTE: To share in the benefits of God's covenant **circumcision** is now required. It becomes the symbol of response to and commitment to the covenant. It applies to all, both **slave** and **free**. This is confirmation that even the lowest of the low in the family tribe were seen as within God's covenant and therefore as His people. **Refusal** would mean **excommunication** or **worse**, but this is an emphasis on the totality of the requirement rather than being given as a practical alternative. It is NOT really facing people with a choice. The one who refused would be revealing himself as deliberately blaspheming God, but there is always the possibility of those who will take an extreme position. Compare the seriousness with which **Moses'** lapse was treated (Ex. 4:24-26). (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/genesis-17.html>)

Genesis 17:15-19, *And God said unto **Abraham**, As for **Sarai** thy wife, thou shalt NOT call her name Sarai, but **Sarah** shall her name be. And 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 (from) her.*

*Then Abraham fell upon his face, and **laughed** (to laugh outright in scorn), 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? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And 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.*

Isaac defined 3327, (laughter i.e. mockery [mockery: scorn: words or behavior intended to make something or somebody look SILLY or ridiculous].)

Thought 1. Abraham struggles to believe in his heart that at their late age that he and Sarah will still have a child. So, he laughs in disbelief, since he's thinking about just letting Ishmael be enough, as far as his seed is concerned. So Yahweh quickly corrects and encourages him, re-affirming that Sarah shall bear him a son.

Genesis 17:20-22, And as for **Ishmael**, I have HEARD thee: **behold (SEE)**, 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.

But my COVENANT will **I establish (perform, set up)** with **Isaac**, which Sarah shall **bear** unto thee **at this SET time** in the next year. And he LEFT OFF **talking with** him, and God went up from Abraham.

Thought 1. They only have about a year of waiting: "at this set time in the next year"! Now, that's really encouraging! Well, they had that baby! And the rest is history! How did they do it? Well, let's see what the scriptures say about it.

Genesis 18:10-15, And 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. Now Abraham and Sarah were **old** and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the MANNER of women. (1868 B.C.) Therefore Sarah **laughed (to laugh outright in scorn) within** herself, saying,

After I am waxed **old** shall I have pleasure, my lord (*Abraham*) being **old** also? And the Lord said unto Abraham, **Wherefore (why?)** did **Sarah** augh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

Is **any thing TOO HARD** for the Lord? At the **TIME appointed** I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, **I laughed not;** for she was **afraid**. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

Romans 4:17-21, (As it is written, I have **MADE** thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who **quickeneth (make alive)** the dead, and **calleth** those things which be not as though they were. (*Abraham*) Who against **hope (expectation)** BELIEVED in **HOPE (to anticipate, usually with pleasure, expectation)**, that he might become **the father** of MANY nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy SEED be.

Thought 2. He had to anticipate: EXPECT with pleasure what was promised. And do so against (contrary to) what physical circumstances said was expected.

And being **NOT weak in FAITH**, he considered NOT his own body now **dead**, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the **deadness** of Sara's womb: He staggered NOT at the **PROMISE** of God through UNBELIEF; but was **STRONG in faith**, giving glory to God; And being **FULLY persuaded** that, what HE had PROMISED, he was **ABLE** also to **perform**.

Thought 3. His reverence for Yahweh produced STRONG faith in him!

Genesis 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.

And Abraham was NINETY years old and NINE, when **he** was **circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin**. And Ishmael his SON was **thirteen** years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And **all** the **MEN** of his house, **BORN** in the house, and **BOUGHT** with money of the stranger, **were circumcised** with him.