

# GENESIS

(BERE'SHEET)<sup>1</sup>

**CHAPTER 17:1** And Abram *was*<sup>s</sup> a son of ninety years<sup>s</sup> and nine years, and YHVH was seen toward Abram, and said toward him, “I *am* EL SHADDAI,<sup>2</sup> walk about<sup>3</sup> before my face<sup>p</sup> and be whole;<sup>4</sup> **2** and I will give my pact between me and between you, and I will make you abundant<sup>c</sup>, in exceedingly, exceedingly *measure*.” **3** And Abram fell upon his face<sup>p</sup>, and ELOHIM spoke to him saying, **4** “I—look!—my pact *is* with you, and you will become father of a crowd of nations. **5** And not still will your name be called Abram—and your name will be Abraham, for father of a crowd of nations I have given you. **6** I will make you bear fruit<sup>c</sup>, in exceedingly, exceedingly *measure*, and I will give you to *be* nations, and kings from you will go out. **7** And I have made rise<sup>c</sup>, my pact between me and between you, and between your seed after you, for their *life-cycles*,<sup>5</sup> for a pact age-lasting,<sup>6</sup> to be to you for ELOHIM, and to your seed after you. **8** And I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land of your sojournings—all the land of Canaan, for an age-lasting holding, and I will be to them for ELOHIM.” **9** And ELOHIM said toward Abraham, “And *you*—my pact you will guard—you and your seed after you, throughout their *life-cycles*.<sup>7</sup> **10** This *is* my pact that you<sup>p</sup> will guard between me and between you<sup>p</sup>, and between your<sup>s</sup> seed after you<sup>s</sup>—every male to you *is* to be trimmed back. **11** And you<sup>p</sup> will be trimmed back—the flesh of your<sup>p</sup> foreskin, and it will be a sign of a pact between me and between you<sup>p</sup>. **12** A son of eight days to you will be trimmed back among you<sup>p</sup>, every male throughout your *life-cycles*,<sup>8</sup> brought forth of house or acquired of silver from any son of a foreigner, who not

---

<sup>1</sup> The books of the Hebrew Bible are named from their opening words: here *Bere'sheet*, meaning “At *the* first of . . . .”

<sup>2</sup> Heb *shad* (here plural) can mean either “nipple,” “breast,” (see Gen 49:25) or “destruction,” thus combining ideas of nurture, protection, and fearful power.

<sup>3</sup> This form of the verb carries an iterative meaning, thus “to walk back and forth.”

<sup>4</sup> Or “complete,” in the sense of sound and without flaws.

<sup>5</sup> Or “generation,” a cycle from birth to death.

<sup>6</sup> I.e., continually; Heb idiom referring to an undetermined time into the future or in the past.

<sup>7</sup> See v. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Or “generations,” a cycle from birth to death.

your<sup>s</sup> seed he is. **13** Being trimmed back—he will *surely* be trimmed back!<sup>9</sup> One brought forth of your<sup>s</sup> house, or acquired of your<sup>s</sup> silver; and my pact will be in your<sup>p</sup> flesh a pact age-lasting.<sup>10</sup> **14** And a foreskined one, a male, who will not be trimmed back—the flesh of his foreskin—and cut from his people will be that life-breather; my pact he has broken<sup>c</sup>.<sup>11</sup> **15** And ELOHIM said toward Abraham, “Sarai your woman—you will not call her name Sarai, because Sarah<sup>12</sup> *is* her name. **16** And I will bless her, and also I have given<sup>13</sup> from her, to you, a son, and I will bless her, and she will become nations—kings of peoples from her will come.” **17** And Abraham fell upon his face<sup>p</sup>, and he laughed,<sup>14</sup> and he said in his heart, “To a son of a hundred years<sup>s</sup> will one be brought forth? And will Sarah, who *is* a daughter of ninety years, bring forth?” **18** And Abraham said toward the ELOHIM, “If only Ishmael might live before your face<sup>p</sup>!” **19** And ELOHIM said, “Surely Sarah your woman is bringing forth to you a son, and you will call his name Isaac,<sup>15</sup> and I will make my pact rise<sup>c</sup> with him, for a pact age-lasting<sup>16</sup> to his seed after him. **20** And to Ishmael, I have heard you, look!—I bless him, and I will make him bear<sup>c</sup> fruit, and I will make him abundant<sup>c</sup> in exceedingly, exceedingly *measured*, two *and* ten chieftains he is bringing forth<sup>c</sup>,<sup>17</sup> and I will give him to *be* a large nation. **21** And my pact I will make rise<sup>c</sup> with Isaac, whom Sarah will bring forth to you at this appointed time in the year, the another one.”<sup>18</sup> **22** And he finished speaking with him, and ELOHIM went up from upon Abraham. **23** And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all those brought forth of his house, and all those acquired of his silver—every male in the men of the house of Abraham—and he trimmed back the flesh of their foreskin, in the bone of this day,<sup>19</sup> as ELOHIM had

---

<sup>9</sup> Double use of the verb indicates emphasis.

<sup>10</sup> I.e., continually; Heb idiom referring to an undetermined time into the future or in the past.

<sup>11</sup> Lit “caused breaking.” The verb is causative, difficult to bring out in English.

<sup>12</sup> Meaning, “noblewoman” or female ruler.

<sup>13</sup> In the sense of “appointed,” the verb is in the perfect tense, though future, showing certainty.

<sup>14</sup> The verb, *tzachaq* means “laugh,” but the context must determine whether it is in the sense of playing, mocking, or even sexual joy. See v.19, as it is connected to Isaac’s name, and Gen 18:12 where Sarah also laughs.

<sup>15</sup> Meaning, “he laughs.”

<sup>16</sup> I.e., continually; Heb idiom referring to an undetermined time into the future or in the past.

<sup>17</sup> Lit “causing bringing forth.” The verb is causative, difficult to bring out in English.

<sup>18</sup> I.e., the year following.

<sup>19</sup> I.e., “in the selfsame day,” meaning in the very substance of the day.

spoken to him. **24** And Abraham *was* a son of ninety and nine years<sup>s</sup> at his being trimmed back—the flesh of his foreskin. **25** And Ishmael his son *was* a son of three *and* ten years<sup>s</sup> at his being trimmed back—the flesh of his foreskin. **26** In the bone of this day<sup>20</sup> Abraham was trimmed back—and Ishmael his son; **27** and all the men of his house—brought forth of house, and acquired of silver from the the son of a foreigner—they were trimmed back with him.

---

<sup>20</sup> See previous note.