

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

Genesis 17: 1-7 (8-14) 15-16.

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, Happy birthday. I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face, for he did not walk well without his staff: and once he had got up, God talked with him, saying unto him,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. And Abram was much encouraged, for this promise did put fire in his loins. For much time had passed.

5 And God said, Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And Abram scratched a bit, and wondered why his name should be changed, (for it is a play on words, let the reader understand, but it loseth something in translation. Actually, quite a lot. Everything, in fact. Especially when you think it reads right to left.)

6 And God said, I will make thee exceeding fruitful, put arrows in thy quiver so to speak, and I will make nations of thee, and kings (and queens) shall come out of thee. Well, not literally, but you get my drift. And Abraham (for that was now his name) did glance downwards and wonder, for he was ninety and nine years old. And much time had passed, yet he had not forgotten.

7 And God continued, 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 God did wink exceedingly, for he knoweth of which type of seed he did speak. And Abraham understood.

[8 And God speaketh, saying, 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 knew that this would cause a problem in time to come, but he did ignore it.

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. And Abraham wearied mightily with all this talk of seed.

10 And God declared, 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 Abraham did wince, and his cheeks did clench at these words.

11 And God commanded, Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And Abraham spake, saying, Is there not another way, O God? Wilt thou not accept a goat or two young pigeons instead?

12 But God continued, 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.

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 for an everlasting covenant.

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. And Abraham realised that in time to come that these commands would not be read in public for fear of controversy.]

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And Abraham did comment, She shall not like that. Are you going to tell her? She might ignore you, you know. She's very good at that.

16 But God said, 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 (and queens) of people shall be of her. And Abraham was comforted, and did take Sarah into his tent that very night. And there were loud ejaculations of joy.

[These verses in brackets may be omitted in public if so deemed, and if the hearers are queasy about foreskins and the snipping thereof. Fear of controversy must be avoided, especially in school assemblies, family worship and Messy Synagogue.]