

# Genesis 17:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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**And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I...** This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

## Interlinear Text

אֱלֹהִים	אָבָל	שְׁבַת	אֲשֶׁתֶךְ	וְלִדְתֶּךְ	לְבָבְךָ
<b>said</b> H559	<b>And God</b> H430	<b>indeed</b> H61	<b>Sarah</b> H8283	<b>thy wife</b> H802	<b>shall bear</b> H3205
					H0 <b>thee a son</b> H1121
וְקַמְתָּ	אֶת	שְׁמֵךְ	וְקַרְבָּאת	אֶת	לְבָרֶית
<b>and thou shalt call</b> H7121	<b>H853</b>	<b>his name</b> H8034	<b>Isaac</b> H3327	<b>and I will establish</b> H6965	<b>H853</b>
					<b>covenant</b> H1285
לְבָרֶית	אֶת	עוֹלָם	לִזְרָעָה	אֶת	אֶחָדִים
<b>H854</b>	<b>covenant</b> H1285	<b>with him for an everlasting</b> H5769	<b>and with his seed</b> H2233	<b>after him</b> H310	

## Additional Cross-References

**Genesis 21:6** (References God): And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

**Genesis 26:3** (Parallel theme): Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

**Genesis 17:21** (Covenant): But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.