

# Genesis 17:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with...** 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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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּל וְאֶת בֶּן וְיַשְׁמַע אֶל אֶת אֶבְרָהָם מִלְּקָר חַ

took And Abraham H853 Ishmael his son H853 H3605  
H3947 H85 H3458 H1121 H3605

מִלְּקָר תְּמִימָנָה וְאֶת בֵּית כָּל וְאֶת בֵּית יִלְּאָד וְ

and all that were born house H853 H3605 and all that were bought H4736  
H3211 H1004 H1004

אֶבְרָהָם מִלְּקָר בְּאֶבְשָׁר וְאֶת בֵּית כָּל כְּסֹף וְ

with his money H3605 every male H2145 house And Abraham H85  
H3701 H3605 H2145 H1004 H85

פֶּזֶת הַיּוֹם בְּעֵצֶם שְׁרֵלֶת מִן בְּשֵׁר אֶת יְמִינָל וְ

and circumcised H853 the flesh H1320 of their foreskin H6190 in the selfsame H6106 day H2088  
H4135 H853 H1320 H6190 H6106 H3117

אֱלֹהִים: אֶת וְדָבָר כְּאֶשֶׁר

had said H854 as God H430  
H1696 H854 H430

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