

THE SIGN IN THE FLESH

Genesis 17:9-14



GENESIS 17:9–14

Four Movements Tonight

The covenant must be guarded

The covenant receives a visible sign

The sign extends through the household

The covenant cannot be treated casually



CONTEXT

From Promise to Response

God reveals Himself and declares His promise

God establishes Abraham's identity and defines the covenant

God gives the covenant sign

Abraham must respond in obedience



OPENING QUESTION

Have we allowed outward religious identity to replace the inward surrender and obedient response that covenant relationship with God requires?



LEADING TONIGHT

Stand out points

The flesh cannot produce the promise

A sign points beyond itself, never replacing the reality

Household leadership is never neutral



Genesis 17:9–11

9 And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

10 This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;

11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.”

Genesis 17:12–14

12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.

13 He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14 And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

GENESIS 17:9

“As For You”

God has said, “I will” again and again

Now He says, “As for you”

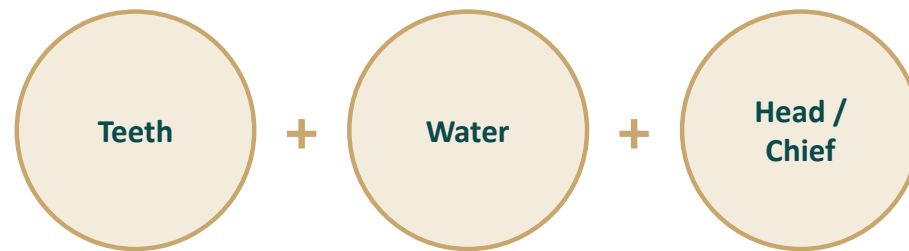
Abraham must guard what God has entrusted

The covenant is personal and generational



Shamar — To Guard

שָׁמַר • shaw-MAR



A teaching picture: watching over something that might otherwise be consumed, scattered, or lost.

What is not guarded will eventually be neglected. What is repeatedly neglected will eventually be lost.

GENESIS 17:9

“As For You”

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Now He says, “As for you”

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The covenant is personal and generational



GENESIS 17:10–11

A Sign, Not the Substance

Circumcision is called “a sign of the covenant”

A sign points beyond itself

The mark is placed where the promise concerns Abraham's seed

The flesh will not produce what only God can give



Oth — Sign

אות • oht



A visible mark connecting a person to an established authority and covenant identity.

The sign did not let Abraham define the covenant for himself — it identified him with God's covenant authority.

GENESIS 17:10–11

A Sign, Not the Substance

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The mark is placed where the promise concerns Abraham's seed

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GENESIS 17:12–13

The Whole Household

Circumcised on the eighth day

Sons born in the house, and those bought with money

“My covenant shall be in your flesh”

Faith is personal, but never isolated



GENESIS 17:14

Cannot Be Treated Casually

The uncircumcised male is “cut off”

He “has broken My covenant”

Belonging cannot be separated from obedience

Refusing the smaller cutting brings the greater one



CLOSING SYNTHESIS

The Shepherd and the Sheep

THE SHEPHERD

- Establishes the covenant
- Gives the sign, marks His people
- Orders the household
- Protects the covenant community
- Confronts rebellion
- Thinks generationally
- Remains faithful to His promise

THE SHEEP

- Hear the Shepherd
- Guard what He has entrusted
- Respond visibly in obedience
- Bring the private life under His authority
- Lead households faithfully
- Reject empty outward religion
- Allow the heart to be circumcised

A WORD ABOUT THE TABLE

The Bread and the Cup Are a Sign, Too

They do not create the new covenant

They cannot manufacture a surrendered heart

They point toward a reality that must already be true

Is the reality still true of you?

Two Signs, Not One Replacement

Circumcision marked the covenant household

Baptism marks identification with Christ

Communion remembers the covenant sacrifice

Signs testify to faith — they do not create it



What the Physical Sign Was Always Pointing To

Physical circumcision removed flesh from the body

Circumcision of the heart removes the heart's resistance

The Spirit breaks the rule of the flesh, not a knife

The evidence: a growing desire to hear and obey Him



Ask Yourself Tonight

What am I trusting — Christ, or an identity?

What am I protecting that He has told me to cut away?

What am I trying to produce through the flesh?

What must become visible in my obedience?



THE SIGN IN THE FLESH

Genesis 17:9-14

