Genesis

A study of the beginning

Lesson #10

Return Church

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

August 12, 2026

Genesis

A study of the beginning

- Lesson #1 – The Creation
- Lesson #2 – We were made for relationships
- Lesson #3 – We were made for stewardship
- Lesson #4 – Paradise lost
- Lesson #5 – East of Eden
- Lesson #6 – The Flood
- Lesson #7 – The Rainbow
- Lesson #8 – The Tower
- Lesson #9 – Abram – The Call
- **Lesson #10 - Abraham – The Covenant**
- Lesson #11 – Sodom and Gomorrah

Abraham

The Covenant

Genesis 15

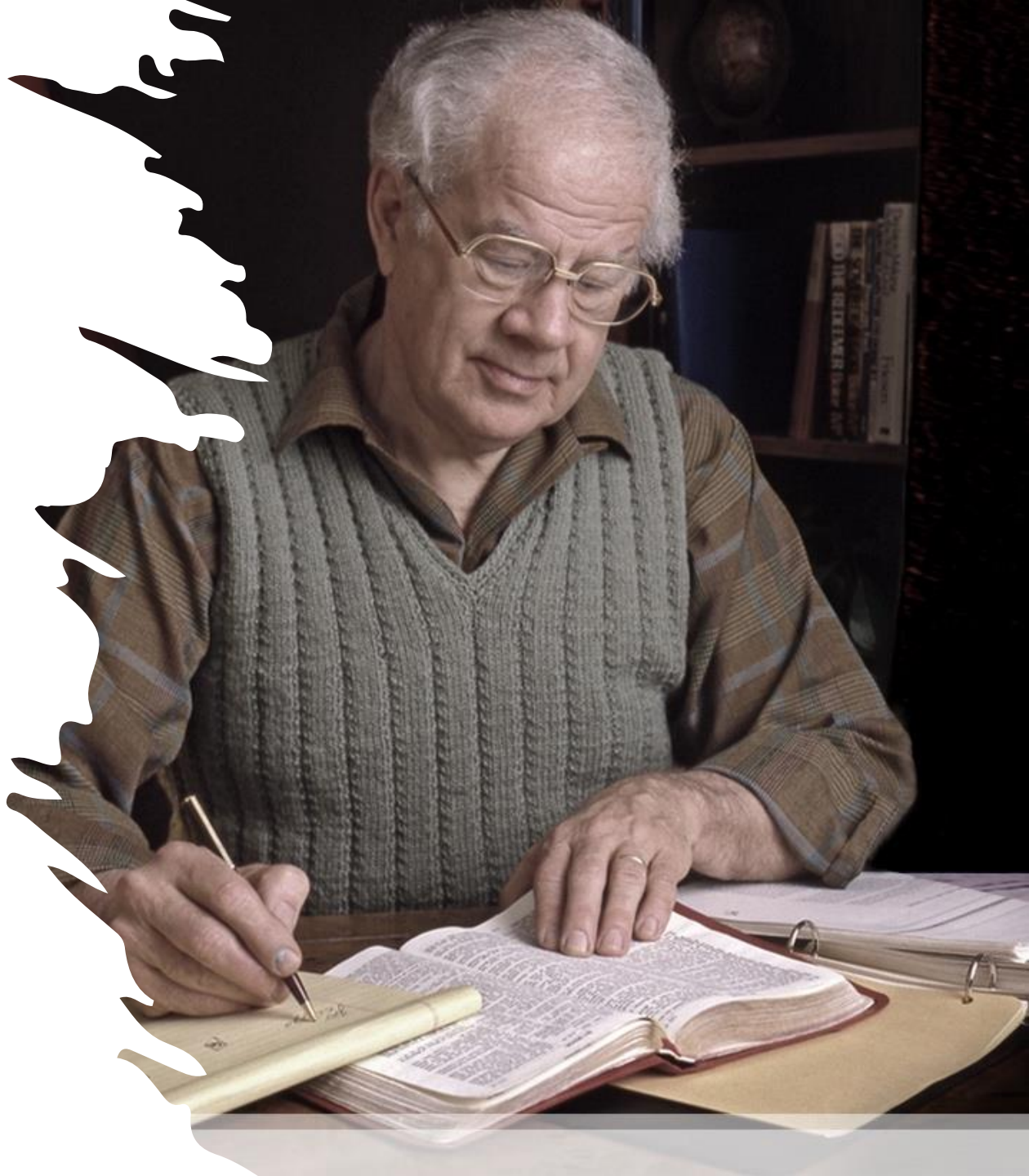
- Many theologians consider Genesis chapter 15 the most important chapter in the Bible.
- Because here God binds Himself to man with a covenant.
- The entire rest of the Bible is God keeping His promise He made in Genesis 15.
- This lesson, this chapter, this subject are all very rich.

Dwight Pentecost

The Abrahamic Covenant is the indispensable key to the history of the world and to the plan of God for the ages.

The unconditional covenant's fulfillment depends entirely on the faithfulness of God, not the failure of man.

Every subsequent covenant—whether the Davidic Covenant or the New Covenant—is simply an amplification of the promises originally given to Abraham.



My favorite Bible verse in the Old Testament

And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. ***Genesis 15:17 NKJV***

In this lesson:

1. We will learn what a covenant is, and we will look at the 5 major covenants in the Bible.
2. We will see that the Bible is one big book of promises from God to mankind. It is a covenantal document from God to man.
3. We will learn the only way a sinful human being can become righteous.
4. How the gospel is not a cooperative agreement between God and mankind, and that the new covenant is an unconditional covenant.
5. How our identity changes completely when we get saved.
6. How God intends to not only save us but to change and transform us.

Pay attention, because this lesson is very rich.

Covenant

- At Return Church we always emphasize and teach that everyone of us needs a personal relationship with God.
- But that could mean a relationship as a teacher/student, a friend/friend, a father/son or daughter, or a bride/bridegroom relationship.
- A covenantal relationship is different from all of those. It is more like a partnership between man and God.
- The Bible is a not just a manual for living a better life, or a book of divinely inspiring stories, or God's rule book, but it is a covenantal document between God and man.
- It is a binding agreement between mankind and God.
- The Bible is a book of covenantal promises that God has made to man.
- God always initiates the covenant, then makes promises, and then gives a sign.

Covenants

There are 5 major covenants in the Bible.

1. **Noahic Covenant**
2. **Abrahamic Covenant**
3. **Mosaic Covenant**
4. **Davidic Covenant**
5. **New Covenant**

- There are smaller covenants mentioned in scripture.
  - Edenic covenant or Adamic covenant, and Palestinian covenant.

5 major covenants in the Bible

1. **Noahic Covenant**
2. **Abrahamic Covenant**
3. **Mosaic Covenant – conditional**
4. **Davidic Covenant**
5. **New Covenant**

- Only the Mosaic covenant is conditional, all the others are unconditional covenants.
- The Mosaic and Davidic covenants are only between God and Israel.
- The new covenant was made to Israel, but the Gentiles were later grafted into the new covenant by faith in Jesus Christ.

Signs of the covenants

1. Noahic Covenant – The rainbow
2. Abrahamic Covenant – Circumcision
3. Mosaic Covenant – The 10 Commandments (the Sabbath)
4. Davidic Covenant – The throne
5. New Covenant – Bread and wine (water baptism)

Noahic Covenant

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that *is* with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said: This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. ***Genesis 9:8-13 NKJV***

Noahic Covenant

- With this covenant, God made a great promise to Noah, and then He put the rainbow in the sky.
- We recently had a lesson on when you see the rainbow, you should think of the promises of God.
- I shared 50 promises from the Bible that God has made to man.
- There are literally hundreds of promises in the Bible.
- In fact, the Bible is one big book of promises from God.
- So, when you think of a covenant with God, think of His promises.

Mosaic Covenant

- The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for 430 years.
- Then God delivers them from Egypt and brings them out into the wilderness, to Mount Sinai.

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant**, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. ***Exodus 19:3-6 NKJV***

- This covenant is different because it is conditional. Again, it was full of God's promises but with this covenant, the promises were conditional. (Deut 28)
- The Mosaic covenant was never meant to be the final answer. It was meant to expose the problem so everyone would see their need for something better.

Davidic Covenant

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son…….**And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever**. ***II Samual 7:12-16 NKJV***

The new covenant

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.....For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. ***Jeremiah 31:31-34 NKJV***

The new covenant

- With the new covenant, God says I have dealt with your sins so completely through the blood of my son that your sins no longer define your standing before me.
- We are living inside this new covenant.
- Which means we are not on a probationary period.
- We are not on a performance plan where God is seeing if we deserve to stay in relationship with Him.
- Our standing before God does not rise and fall based upon our performance.
- If there is a gap between who you are and who you want to be, it is because you are still a work in progress.

Covenant

בְּרִית

Covenant; (in the sense of cutting; a compact (made by passing between pieces of flesh): confederacy, league, alliance, pledge, treaty, constitution, agreement.

Covenant

- In ancient times this is how people made agreements, contracts or covenants with each other.
- They would cut an animal up into pieces and put an aisle between the pieces. Then both parties would walk down the aisle. By this they were saying, if I do not keep the contract, may I be killed and cut up into pieces.

Because you have broken the terms of our covenant, I will cut you apart just as you cut apart the calf when you walked between its halves to solemnize your vows. Yes, I will cut you apart, whether you are officials of Judah or Jerusalem, court officials, priests, or common people—for you have broken your oath. I will give you to your enemies, and they will kill you. Your bodies will be food for the vultures and wild animals. ***Jeremiah 34:18-20 NLT***

The Abrahamic Covenant

In Genesis Chapter 15 and 17, we learn about the Abrahamic Covenant.

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward. ***Genesis 15:1 NKJV***

- **Shield –** I am your protection
- **Great reward –** I am your provision

Abram's vision

- Abram had just taken 318 of his men and gone to war in-order-to rescue Lot who had been taken captive.
- Right after this, Abram paid a tithe to Melchizedek king of Salem. (King of righteousness, king of peace.)
- Then the king of Sodom tried to reward Abram and Abram refused any payment or reward from him.
- Then God comes to him in a vision saying "Fear not."
- I am your shield, (protection) and your great reward. (provision)

God made him righteousness

But Abram said, Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus? Then Abram said, Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir! And behold, the word of the Lord *came* to him, saying, This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir. Then He brought him outside and said, Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them. And He said to him, So shall your descendants be. **And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness**. ***Genesis 15:2-6 NKJV***

He believed

Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. For the Scriptures tell us, **Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous** because of his faith. ***Romans 4:1-3 NLT***

He believed God and God counted him as righteous.

How are we made righteous?

- Everybody feels the need for righteousness.
- We all have standards we set in-order-to feel good about ourselves or to accept ourselves, or in order that others will accept us, or that God will accept us.
- We might have got theses standards from our parents, or from a church, or our culture that we were raised in.
- All people try hard to patch up their own righteousness, they use great effort in order to feel good about them selves.
- People try to meet these standards to feel righteous.
- God wants us to get rid of that kind of thinking.
- God has provided a righteousness for us in Jesus Christ.
- We can never live up to standards.
- We can never be righteous on our own.
- The righteousness we find in Christ is our only hope, and God puts this on us when we believe in Him. That’s the gospel.

What are standards?

- How do we dress?
- How do we wear our hair?
- Do we wear jewelry or not, or piercings?
- Do we have tattoos or not?
- What we eat or drink or what we don’t eat or drink.
- What kind of music do we listen to?
- What do we watch on TV, or do we even watch TV?
- How we worship?
- When and how do you observe the Sabbath?
- We have a list of things we are not supposed to do.
- We have a list of things we are supposed to do.

























Self-righteousness

- Trying to meet the standards to make myself righteousness is sinful. (Self-righteousness)
- When I try to live by my own standards (even if I learned them from my childhood), and I think; if I can do that or achieve that I will be accepted by God, I am trying to be righteous on my own.
- The result is feeling guilty and anxious.
- Guilt is missing the standards that we set for ourselves.
- There is only one answer to this: the gospel.
- Learning how to receive the righteousness that comes from God.
- Stop stealing self-acceptance from every other thing, success, beauty, popularity, money, etc… and begin to trust the privileges you have in Christ Jesus.
- Jesus brings me to God, or makes me acceptable to God, by doing everything for me. It is what Jesus did 2,000 years ago that makes me righteous today.
- It is not what I do, but rather what Jesus has done.

2 very different kinds of people

- There are two kinds of people sitting in churches with two utterly opposed religions or viewpoints. Completely different from one another.
- They may live in the same neighborhood, vote the same party, their kids go to the same schools, they go to the same church, but one is righteous and the other is not.
- The first man says, I know what Christianity is, I am going to emulate the Lord, I am going to believe the Bible, I am going to be a good person, I am going to have faith, I am gong to help the poor. This is you putting together a righteousness of your own, and giving it to God. You believe that will be your salvation.
- This second man says, I have nothing in myself that will make me righteous with God. No matter what I do or don't do, I cannot be righteous on my own. But Jesus came to this earth and lived a righteous life, and if I put my trust in Him, He will impute that righteousness onto me. This will be my salvation.

- *Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous*.

Gentiles are grafted into the promises

Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, In you all the nations shall be blessed. So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. ***Galatians 3:6-9 NKJV***

Salvation is not a cooperative, conditional agreement between God and man.

- Why is Paul pointing us to Abraham?
- Paul is referring to Genesis the 15th chapter.
- I'm not sure I really understood the gospel, until God opened my eyes to this truth in Genesis the 15th chapter.
- Salvation is not a cooperative, conditional agreement between God and man. There is not stronger place in the Bible that teaches this than Genesis 15.
- God gives him the promise and Abraham responds by believing.
- I know I have taught this before, but it is so important, I feel that we should go over it once again.

Abraham wanted to know

And he said, Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it? ***Genesis 15:8 NKJV***

So He said to him, bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; ***Genesis 15:9-10 NKJV***

I'm sure Abraham knew that God was about to enter into a covenant with him and that he thought God was going to ask him to walk down the aisle, between the pieces of the cut-up animals.

Smoking oven & burning torch

Abraham must have thought, God must want me to make a promise, He wants me to walk between the pieces, to show Him that I will keep my end of the agreement. Instead, God put a deep sleep on Abram.

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. ***Genesis 15:12 NKJV***

And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram. ***Genesis 15:17-18. NKJV***

Amazing

- This is astonishing! God passed through the pieces for Abraham, on his behalf. God did it for him.
- God never asked Abraham to pass through the pieces.
- What God was saying, may I die, or may I be cut off if I don’t keep my end of the deal, or if you don’t keep your end of the deal.
- God was saying, if you don’t keep your end of the agreement, even if I have to be killed and cut to pieces, I will do this for you.
- This was an unconditional covenant. It didn’t depend upon man’s obedience, instead it depended upon the faithfulness of God.

God passed between the pieces

- As Jesus was hanging on Calvary's cross, a great darkness came upon the land. The sun refused to shine as the creatures were crucifying their creator.
- It was here that God passed between the pieces.
- Salvation is not a cooperative, conditional agreement between God and man. God makes the promise, you simply must believe and receive.
- People are always saying what do I need to do to be saved?
- How much faith do I need to have? All you need is Jesus plus nothing.
- Salvation doesn't come by keeping the law. It is a promise from God, you simply need to believe. You need trust God.
- Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- This is why Paul in the book of Galatians, points us to Abraham. God made an agreement with Abraham. A promise agreement, a covenantal agreement, and he simply had to believe it.

The covenant

On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. ***Genesis 15:18 NKJV***

- God promises Abram's descendants (Israel) the land.
- Then God listed the 10 enemies that occupied the promise land.
- Remember when the spies first saw the land, they were crippled with fear, saying they are too great for us, we cannot possess the land.
- Why was this so important that God had to include this in the most important chapter of the Bible?
- He was saying to Abram, that I will not only give you this land, but you will possess this land, and you will drive your enemies out of the land so you can live in peace.
- God not only give the believer salvation, but he also grants to them transformation. If you follow Jesus, He will change you.

A picture of what is in us? (our flesh)

1. **Kenites –** #7017, metal workers, possession.
2. **Kenezzites** #7074, hunters.
3. **Kadmonites** #6935, old, ancient, former or past things.
4. **Hittites** #2850, terror, fear, fearful.
5. **Perizzites** #6522, villager, dwelling in unwalled villages.
6. **Rephaim** #7497, giants, the dead.
7. **Amorites** #567, mountaineer, speaker, talker.
8. **Canaanites** #3669, merchants, trader, depressed, to be low.
9. **Girgashites** #1622, dwells in clay, (earthliness).
10. **Jebusites** #2982, a place trodden down, oppression, strongholds.

7 enemy nations

When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the **Hittites** and the **Girgashites** and the **Amorites** and the **Canaanites** and the **Perizzites** and the **Hivites** and the **Jebusites**, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.
Deuteronomy 7:1-2 NKJV

- Then 480 years later, Joshua is ready to enter the promise land.
- **Hivites** – villager, serpent.
- Some things may not be enemies, but they are still occupying the land, they need to be removed.
- **Kadmonites** – things of the past, sometimes you can't go any further with God because you are still living in the past. You must move on.

The covenant

- God was saying, not only will I give you this land, but I will drive out the inhabitants of the land for you.
- You can never have peace until your enemies are gone.
- So much for the Old Testament is trying to teach us this.
- The entire life of King David was a bloody life, one of war, as he was constantly fighting the enemies of the promise land.
- God doesn't just want to save us, He wants to sanctify us, to make us holy. God wants to transform us or change us.
- God wants to drive out or destroy all of your flesh, (the enemies, the giants). God wants to crucify everything in you that is not like Him.
- He wants to make us like Jesus. It is a promise. We have a covenant from God.

Walk before me and be blameless

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ***Genesis 17:1-4 NKJV***

- **Walk before me.**
- **Be blameless.**

Abraham

No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.
Genesis 17:5-8 NKJV

God changes his name to Abraham

- Because Abram answered the call, he now had a new identity.
- God changed the names of several people in the Bible.
- Abram (exalted father) – Abrham (father of a multitude)
- Sarai (princess) – Sarah – (Mother of nations and kings)
- Jacob (heel catcher, supplanter) – Israel (God prevails)
- Simon (he has heard) – Peter (rock)
- Saul (he persecuted Christians) he became Paul (the great apostle.)

ה

אַבְרָם Abram the exalted father.

אַבְרָהָם Abraham the father of a multitude, of many nations.

יהוה ה

- The hay is the 5th letter in the Hebrew alphabet.
- It has a numerical value of 5.
- 5 is the number of grace.
- The hay is one of 3 letters in the divine tetragrammaton name.
- Many believe the hay speaks of the divine breath of God. Since the pronunciation is a breath sound.
- When God changed the name of Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah, he simply put a hey in each of their names.
- He put His divine breath into their name.
- He put His grace into their lives.
- He gave them a new identity. A new name.
- He redefined who they were.

When we get saved, we get a new identity

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

For you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. **Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people**. ***I Peter 2:9-10 NLT***

Identity

- This matter of identity is so very important.
- Who you are? What are you doing trying to establish your identity? Being successful, marrying the right person, having a great ministry?
- You are not what you do?
- You are not who the kids in the schoolyard said you are.
- You are not who the devil has tried to make you believe you are.
- Loser, sinner, unworthy, stupid, ugly, failure, worthless, dirt-bag, etc…
- The moment you got saved, the Holy Spirit put you in Christ. You immediately became who God says you are:
- The Word of God says you are saved, redeemed, justified, sanctified, holy, righteous, an adopted child of God.
- I am who God says I am. I am who I am “in Christ”.
- I am a born-again Christian, and I have a new identity, I have a new name.