

# Read through the Bible



## Genesis Week 3



*Monday, October Twenty - Eighth*

One of the fun parts of pregnancy for parents is coming up with a name for their child. Some choose to give a Biblical name, like Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Mary, or Esther. Some decide on a name that they heard in a movie or a TV show. Others pick the name of a family member, like a grandfather or a great-grandmother. Some parents choose a name based on someone they look up to, like George Washington or Queen Elizabeth. Sometimes, parents simply go through a whole list of names, and choose the name that sounds best to them. In today's passage, Abram is given a new name.

*Read:* Genesis 17:1-27

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What new name did God give to Abram, and what did it mean? (see verse 5)

As you've probably noticed so far in Genesis, God often gave people names, and their names almost always meant something. In this case, God renamed Abram to reflect the reality that he would become the father of many nations.

- How were Abraham and his descendants to keep the covenant that God had made with them? (see verses 10-11)
- Why was Abraham and Sarah's future son to be called Isaac? (see verse 17 and the footnote in verse 19)
- How did Abraham and his family obey the covenant? (see verses 23-27)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

If you don't know already, take a moment to find out the meaning of your own name. What does it mean? Why were you given this name? In what ways does your life reflect the meaning of your name? In what ways does it not? How does the idea of a name help you better understand God's promise in Isaiah 43:1? Take some time to thank God that you are His.

## Tuesday, October Twenty-Ninth

Remember the lyrics to this kids' song? "My God is so great, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do!" In today's passage, Abraham and Sarah find out just how great and strong and mighty their God is.

**Read:** Genesis 18:1-33

**Reflect:** Use the passage to work through these questions

- Who appeared to Abraham as he sat at the entrance of his tent? (see verses 1-2)

Who exactly were these three mysterious visitors? While there is some disagreement on the matter, most agree that these visitors were heavenly in nature. 18:1 says that the LORD appeared to Abraham, and (as we'll see tomorrow) 18:22 and 19:1 suggest that two of them were angels. In this sense, some scholars suggest that Abraham's three visitors were God Himself and two angels.

- How does Abraham's response to their visit demonstrate how he viewed these visitors? (see verses 3-8)
- How did Sarah respond to the news that she would be a mother? (see verses 12-15)

When Sarah heard that she was going to have a child, she laughed because she could not believe it would happen at her old age. God's question to Abraham, though, ("Is anything too hard for the LORD?") is a reminder to Sarah and to all of us that there is nothing our God cannot do.

- What was Abraham's concern with God's plans for Sodom and Gomorrah? (see verses 23-31)

**Respond:** Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

James reminds us that when we pray to God, we should not doubt His ability to respond (see James 1:5-8). Likewise, God's question to Abraham in Genesis 18:14 ("Is anything too hard for the LORD?") reminds us of how we should pray. Take some time today to bring your prayers to God with confidence.

## Wednesday, October Thirtieth

In 1968, the MPAA rating system was introduced to help parents determine whether a movie or show was suitable for their children. According to this system, today's passage would receive (at the very least) an 'R' rating.

**Read:** Genesis 19:1-38

**Reflect:** Use the passage to work through these questions

- Why did the men of Sodom surround Lot's house? (see verses 4-5)

Whoa! That escalated quickly! While it may seem bizarre to us that men from all over Sodom would want to have sex with Lot's two visitors, the reality was that they saw no problem in demanding this. This incident demonstrates just how morally corrupt and depraved Sodom had become.

- What instructions did the two angels give to Lot? (see verses 12-13) How did Abraham's pleas to God in 18:23-31 demonstrate why the angels gave these instructions? How does 19:27-29 confirm this?
- What did Lot's daughters decide to do and why did they decide to do it? (see verses 30-32)

This particular passage is difficult for us to read. It is important to note, though, that the Bible displays both the faithfulness and the sins of His people throughout their history. Just like some Bible stories teach us what to do, others teach us what not to do. Some have suggested that Lot's daughters decided to sleep with their father as a means of human survival because they believed they were the only ones left on earth after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, their time in Zoar (see 19:23 and 19:30) indicates that they knew that others existed after that time.

**Respond:** Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

God answered Abraham's plea by not destroying everybody in Sodom. How has God answered one of your recent pleas?

## Thursday, October Thirty-First

One of the best days of the year to get into a popular restaurant without a wait is...today! That may seem a bit strange, but with so many families out trick-or-treating and others getting ready for late-night parties, restaurants often find themselves with plenty of tables on Halloween. To counter this phenomenon, restaurants have tried offering specials and giveaways to get people in the door. In today's passage, Sarah tries to get somebody *out* the door.

*Read:* Genesis 20:1-21:34

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What decision did Abraham make? (see 20:1-2) How did he end up explaining it? (see 20:11-13)

This was not the first time that Abraham attempted to deceive a leader by claiming Sarah as his sister (remember 12:10-13?). Just like the last time, Abraham took matters into his own hands instead of trusting God.

- What problem arose from the birth of Isaac? (see 21:8-10) How was it resolved? (see 21:11-13)

Take a look at Galatians 4:21-31. In that passage, Paul explains the identity of the Galatian Christians by using the story of the conflict between Sarah and Hagar. Through his example, Paul makes the case that the Galatian Christians are like Isaac in that they are not Christians by lineage, but rather, Christians by promise.

- What was the issue that led to Abraham and Abimelek signing a treaty? (see 21:25-26)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In our passage today, Abraham laid out his concern directly to Abimelek, and then worked to resolve the conflict between the two of them. Is there somebody you are currently in conflict with? What steps might you take to resolve the issue? Take some time to bring these concerns to God and ask for His wisdom.

## Friday, November First

What do you fear? Some people fear very broad and philosophical situations like sickness or death. Others fear specific creatures and objects like spiders, snakes, and peaches (yes, that's a thing!). Some fear routines and confrontations like going to work or telling somebody how she or he made you feel. Or if you come from the John F. Kennedy school of thought, the only thing you might fear is fear itself. In today's passage, Abraham is challenged to demonstrate a different kind of fear.

*Read:* Genesis 22:1-23:20

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did God instruct Abraham to do? (see 22:1-2)
- How did Abraham respond? (see 22:3-10)
- What did God conclude about Abraham? (see 22:12)

Your Bible translation might say that Abraham "feared" God in verse 12. What exactly does it mean to "fear" God? In our culture today, to "fear" someone or something is to be afraid of that person or thing. For example, you may "fear" going into the water near John's Pass because of the news reports talking about the dangers of flesh-eating bacteria. But in our passage today and throughout the Bible, to "fear" the LORD means to respect, to submit, and/or to be in awe of God. In this case, Abraham "feared" the LORD by submitting to his command to sacrifice his son. While God ultimately spared this sacrifice, the fact that Abraham was willing to give up his only son for God demonstrates the "fear" that he had. As Christians, we also "fear" God by respecting His authority and submitting to His will.

- What did Abraham want to do to honor Sarah? (see 23:4)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

This story of Abraham and Isaac foreshadows what God would accomplish thousands of years later: giving up His only Son for us. Take some time to thank God for redeeming you with His sacrifice.

## Saturday, November Second

In the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, one of the characters – Yente – is known as the “matchmaker” of the village. As somebody who is naturally nosy and knows what is going on in the lives of the townspeople, Yente is able to use what she knows to bring young women and men together in marriage. In today’s passage, one of Abraham’s servants unexpectedly becomes a matchmaker.

*Read:* Genesis 24:1-67

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did Abraham ask his chief servant to make sure of? (see verses 2-4)

Abraham’s request of the chief servant might seem a bit strange to us today, but back then, putting one’s hand under the thigh of another was a demonstration of a serious oath. Think of it as a handshake or a pinky promise, but much more serious in nature.

- Why did Abraham want to make sure that a wife was brought to his son, and not vice-versa? (see verses 6-8)
- What did the chief servant do when he reached the town? (see verses 12-14)

The chief servant reminds us that when we come across difficult situations, bringing them to God is perhaps the best and first thing we should do. Notice how specific the chief servant was in his prayer. He wasn’t asking for general help; he was asking for specific ways for God to work in this challenging situation.

- How did Laban and Bethuel respond to the chief servant’s story? (see verses 50-51)

*Respond:* Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

When you pray, how specific do you get? Do you pray for general help, or do you pray for specific situations and outcomes? During your prayer time today, consider being specific in your requests. Don’t forget to pray with confidence (see Tuesday’s “Respond”)!

## Sunday, November Third

The famed evangelist Billy Graham once said, “The greatest legacy one can pass on to one’s children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one’s life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.” In today’s passage, Abraham’s life comes to an end, but he leaves behind a legacy of character and faith.

*Read:* Genesis 25:1-34

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What happened to Abraham? (see verses 7-10)

We must not forget that while Abraham had reached the end of his road, his legacy would continue to live on through his lineage all the way to Jesus (“All peoples on earth will be blessed through you” – Genesis 12:3). Abraham’s importance is underscored by the fact that he is mentioned 70 times in the New Testament. The only Old Testament character who has more mentions is Moses (80).

- How did Rebekah become pregnant? (see verse 21)
- Why were the two babies jostling in Rebekah’s womb? (see verses 22-23)
- What did Jacob want from Esau in exchange for the stew? (see verses 29-34)

*Respond:* Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

We are now halfway through the book of Genesis! In preparation for the remainder of the book, take some time to revisit and reflect upon the questions you were asked on Day 1 of this journey: What are you thankful for? What are you concerned about? In what ways are you looking to grow? Take some time to pray through these things with your Creator.

Questions? Comments? Contact Pastor Chris at [chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org](mailto:chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org) or (727) 344-2684.