

## **Building on Biblical Foundations**

### **“What’s in A Name?”**

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Genesis 17

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We continue our story in Genesis Chapter 17

#### **SLIDES: Genesis 17**

**And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.**

**2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.**

**3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,**

**4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.**

**5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.**

**6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.**

**7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.**

**8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.**

**9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.**

**10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.**

**11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.**

**12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.**

**13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.**

**14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.**

**15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.**

**16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.**

**17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?**

**18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!**

**19 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.**

**20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.**

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

**22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.**

**23 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.**

**24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.**

**25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.**

**26 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.**

**27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.**

Genesis 16 tells the story of Ishmael. It is the story of both impatience and accomplishing a thing in our own strength – rather than waiting on the Lord to bring forth his promise. Yet, we also saw how the Lord keeps his promises. Not only did he promise to make Abram a great nation, but he also promised to bless Ishmael, at Abram’s request.

In this chapter we read about the covenant carved in (or more accurately “out of”) flesh – circumcision of every male. This act was to be a physical sign of the covenant relationship between the Lord and his people.

This is also the chapter where the Lord gives Abram, and Sarai new names. He also appoints the name of Abram’s son – Isaac. So, what is in a name?

Why does the Lord change their names?

**Abram to Abraham?** Abram means “exalted father”, Abraham means “father of multitudes.”

**Sarai to Sarah?** Sarai means “princess”, as does Sarah, but Sarah also means “mother of many.” She would become the mother of God chosen people.

**Isaac** – the son of the promise? It means “one who rejoices, one who laughs.”

**Why is this important?**

Let’s go back to the Garden. With a word the Lord created everything that is. With a Word. A spoken word. There is creative power in the spoken word. Not just when the Lord speaks it. . .

Why do I say such a thing?

**Proverbs 18:21** says, “**The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.**”

Words are important to God and they bring great blessing or consequence to us.

When we speak a word, we make a declaration, a proclamation. We would be prudent to use our words with great care.

**Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 - 37**

**“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”**

The Lord gives Abraham and Sarah new names. He is making a declaration over them and through them. He has appointed them to be the parents of nations, of multitudes. Every time that name is spoken it is declared over and over again.

Did you know that God has many names? God reveals himself to us through his names. Each name is a powerful proclamation. Each name reveals a different aspect of His nature, and character.

When we speak His name we declare his character, we proclaim his sovereignty.

We have already encountered a few but there are many others. Let's look at some:

1. **Elohim: God the creator, the Supreme God, in the plural. Genesis 1:1**
2. **Jehovah/ YAHWEH:** Lord, Master. First appears in Genesis 2:4 In the Old Testament Yahweh occurs 6,519 times.

**YHWH** – the personal name of God. Exodus 3:13-15 The Lord reveals himself to Moses with this name.

**Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob — has sent me to you.’ “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation (Exodus 3:13-15).**

3. **El Elyon:** LORD Most High. Used through Scripture to refer to the LORD, Creator of heaven and earth.

**Psalm 57:2 says, “I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.”**

4. **El Roi:** "The God who sees me" spoken by Hagar, Genesis 16.
5. **El Olam:** Everlasting God, Ancient of Days. Genesis 21:33, Jer. 10:10, Isaiah 26:4
6. **Adonai:** Adonai is a Hebrew word that translates as "Lord" of "Lord Master" from its derivation "sovereignty."

**In 1 Samuel 24:8, when David has the chance to take the life of the King of Israel, Saul, who is trying to kill him, and he chooses to spare Saul, he emerges from a cave he has been hiding and calls Saul, "My lord," its root form in the Hebrew similar to Adonai.**

**Psalm 8:1 (ESV) – "O LORD (Yahweh), our Lord (Adonai), how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens."**

- 7. Jehovah Jireh:** The LORD our provider (Genesis 22:14)

**"So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."**

- 8. Jehovah Rapha:** The LORD our Healer (Exodus 15:26)

**"Saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer."**

- 9. Jehovah Nissi:** The LORD our Banner (Exodus 17:15)

**"And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD Is My Banner,"**

- 10. Jehovah Shalom:** The LORD is Peace (Judges 6:24)

**"Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites."**

- 11. Jehovah Raah:** The LORD our Shepherd (Psalms 23:1)

**"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."**

- 12. Jehovah Tsidkenu:** The LORD our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6)

**"In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"**

- 13. Jehovah Shammah:** The LORD is Here. Ezekiel 48:35

- 14. Jehovah Sabaoth:** The Lord of Hosts, The Lord of Armies, The Lord of Powers. Appears over 285 times, most frequently in Jeremiah and Isaiah. First seen in 1 Samuel 1:3.

**"The circumference of the city shall be 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD Is There."**

**15. El-Shaddai:** God Almighty

**When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am El-Shaddai 'God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life (Genesis 17:1).**

**16. Jehovah Mekoddishkem:** The Lord who sanctifies you, the Lord who makes you holy. Exodus 31:13; Lev. 20:8

Each time someone encountered the Lord, a new aspect of his character was revealed and named.

Who is God to you? How has He revealed himself to you personally? Is he your Prince of Peace? Your Provider? Your strength? Your healer? Your deliverer? Your friend? You heavenly Father?

Every time we meet here on Sunday we pray as Jesus taught his disciples, "Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. . .". What does that mean?

Hallowed? It means Holy. Holy be your name. To hallow the name of God is to set him apart, to regard him with loving devotion. The Lord's name is to be revered in our minds, in our hearts and on our tongues.

And most certainly we should never use the Lord's name as a curse.

Do you know what your name means? Do you know why you were named what you are? Does it reflect your personality? Your character?

When we speak someone's name, we declare that name over them.

There are several times in the bible where the Lord changes someone's name. . .we spoke about Sarah and Abraham. We will see it again.

**Jacob becomes Israel.** Jacob means the supplanter, deceiver. Israel means "one who contends or struggles with God, one who strives or prevails with God."

**Simon becomes Peter.** Simon in Hebrew means to hear, or listen. Peter we know means Rock – Jesus changed Simon's name and declared he would build his church on the foundation which was the confession of Peter that Jesus was/is the Messiah.

**Saul becomes Paul.** Interesting that Saul in Hebrew means "the child asked for" and Paul is from the Latin name Paulus which means "small" or "humble." Paul is indeed humbled by his encounter

with Jesus – knocking him off of his horse and blinding him. He spends the remainder of his life in humble submission to the cause and mission of the Lord.

The Lord has changed the names of Abraham and Sarah. He has declared his purpose in them, and affirmed once again that they shall become a great nation, the mother and father of multitudes. Theirs is a partnership with the Lord. He has called them, and they have surrendered time and time again. Confirming their devotion to serve Him and obey all His commands. But more than that, as we shall see, Abraham is not merely a servant of the Lord, he is a friend of God.

He sets before us an example of Faith, trust, obedience and reverence. He believes the Lord, he put his trust in the Lord, he follows the Lord and he worships the Lord.

He makes mistakes. He stumbles at times. He becomes impatient. He leans on his own strength, his won understanding. Yet, he always comes back to the Lord. He submits himself to the Lord's counsel. He humbles himself. And he is ever mindful of his relationship to the Almighty God.

This friendship endures his entire lifetime. That is the example set before us. We are also invited to come close, to become a friend of the Lord, to humble ourselves, to hide ourselves in Him, and trust Him with everything. If we learn to submit ourselves in this way, there is nothing that will shake us.

I encourage you to get to know the names of God, and by so doing, learn his character, his constancy, his mercy and his love. He bids us come. Come near. It is from this place of relationship that we shall triumph over all that seeks to topple the kingdom of God and his people.

For all of us who stay the course, who keep the faith, who overcome.. there is a promise that we too will be given a new name. A name that represents our new identity in Christ. . . Revelation 2:17

**“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except the one who receives it.”**

And of course there is the Name above all names, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – the name by which every knee shall bow, great and small, rich and poor, young and old, and every tongue shall proclaim that HE IS LORD – the Name of Jesus.

**Proverbs 18:10 states, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.”**

Let us Pray. . .

