

**Lesson 3: Genesis 17**  
*Names Change*

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### **Introduction**

God made a covenant with Abraham. A covenant is a contract or agreement. This covenant came with many blessings not only for Abraham, but all of his descendants. All Abraham had to do was obey God's laws. Is it hard for you to obey God sometimes? God shows us, through Abraham no obstacle is too big and He will always be with us.

### **Progression of Events**

Abram was ninety-nine when an angel of God came before him saying, "I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers" (Genesis 17:2). Abram was so deeply moved by the appearance of a heavenly body and the message, he fell to the ground. God was trying to get Abram to understand this covenant was very real and He was about to put things in motion. Can you imagine the awesome words of God coming to you in the form of an angel talking to you? Sometimes we all wish we could speak directly to God and receive answers to our questions. Would you do what God asked, or would you think it was not important enough? Another common pitfall is to handle things our own way, instead of God's? Don't forget, God does talk to us everyday, through the Bible and prayer. Abram did not have the Bible like we do, so God communicated to him through an Angel. As mentioned, God was serious about the agreement He made with Abram and was preparing to

carry it out. The confirming of the covenant promise began with new names. Abram "exalted father" is now Abraham "father of many". Sarai's name is now Sarah, which was not much of a change. It still means "princess". Just as Abraham was now called "the father of many nations" (17:4), Sarah was called "the mother of nations" (17:16). Every time Abraham would be addressed, he would be reminded of God's sure promise. God states that the agreement was to be everlasting between Him and Abraham and all his children to come in the future. God told Abraham the land of Canaan he was living in would be his. What an awesome promise! This would be similar to telling you the state you are living in would all be yours, just for obeying God. Most agreements between people are equal trades. God is showing us through Abraham that obeying God's law will bless us beyond measure.

The second confirming sign of the covenant was circumcision. The angel of God also told Abraham to do something different from other nations of this day. He said, "Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised" (Genesis 17:10-12). God was showing that His people were different not only physically, but also mentally, by having a pure heart and obeying God's true words without question. When we dedicate ourselves to God there is no

turning back. We are to change our old evil habits into new ones of worshipping Him through prayer, fasting, and helping our fellow man in need. We need to be a good example for God, by living our lives His way.

When God told Abraham, he and Sarah would have a child of their own, Abraham bent over in laughter. Here was a man that God considered true to Him, but Abraham doubted the power of God by saying that he and Sarah were old and well beyond childbearing years. If God told you about a future event, would you believe it or laugh with disbelief like Abraham did?

Sometimes, we go through trials and don't understand why we need to suffer. God has a purpose that might be revealed to us, or we may never know why. The one thing we can count on for sure, is we have to believe in our hearts that God will see us through, even until the end. "... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee (Hebrews 13:5).

Abraham was still holding out for his son Ishmael when he asked God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing" (Genesis 17:18). God said again, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him" (Genesis 17:19, 20). God told Abraham He heard his request for his son. Sometimes, it is hard to believe our prayers are heard, and we need that "hit on the head" to realize it. In our time of need, wants, or desires, we get caught up in our own problems to see what God is doing for us. He might not give us exactly what we want, but His wisdom is far better than ours could ever be. God knows what we need even before we come

to him. So next time you talk to God, remember how He blessed Abraham with a son of his own. Even though Sarah and Abraham made a mess of things by taking matters in their own hands with Ishmael. God still turned that sin around and blessed Ishmael.

Faith is knowing what Jesus did in the past, when He laid His life down for us and the hope of what He will do for us in the future, when he returns and sets up His Kingdom on earth.

## Questions for Discussion

10. How old was Abram when the angel appeared to him?
11. What did God change Sarai and Abram's name to?
12. What does Abraham's name mean?
13. What was Abraham to do to all the males in his house?
14. Did Abraham doubt God when he revealed that him a Sarah would have a child?
15. What was the name of the child that Abraham and Sarah were to have?
16. Did God bless Ishmael?
17. Can you trust God?
18. What promises have you trusted God to keep?

## Memory Verse

"No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham for I have made you a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:3).

## JUST FOR TEENS!

1. Spend sometime with teens talking about how they got their names. Everyone was named for a particular reason by their mother and father. Share these name stories together.
2. Use baby name books checked out from your local library to determine what their names mean. Some may know the meanings of their names. Others may not.
3. Turn to Revelation 2: 17, Isaiah 62:2, and Isaiah 65:15. Read students these scriptures telling them about how they will receive a new name in the kingdom. They will make it into the kingdom by overcoming in this world and developing Godly character. Their new name will describe their character as Abraham's new name did. Talk about what character they would like their new name to represent. Perhaps it would be compassionate, friend, loyal, brave. Have the students look through the name books to see if they can discover a name that links to the character trait they would like be named for.
4. Have students make a name bracelet (listed in craft activities) with either the character trait or a new name on the bracelet. As you work, talk about how you could develop your character traits more deeply. Could you volunteer? Could you try new experiences? Could you seek ways to help others?
5. Remind the students that in order to gain a new name, they cannot be like the world. Discuss ways that they must be different from the world.

## Name Puzzles!

These fun name puzzles are perfect for little ones who are learning to read and write their names.

### Teacher Preparation:

Before the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, you will need to make a name puzzle for each child.

- Write each student's name on an envelope.
- Next, write each student's name on colored paper. Make sure you use a dark marker so that the letters show up on the colored paper.
- Cut apart the letters and put them into the child's envelope.
- Don't seal the envelope, just tuck in the flap.
- Make one that says 'Abraham' so you can show the children how to make the puzzle and link back to the story of the day.
- You're ready for the day!

### Activity:

- Demonstrate putting a name puzzle together by doing Abraham's. Show children how to use the name on their envelope to help themselves.
- Pass out each child's envelope and help them put their name puzzles together.
- Students that finish quickly can mix their name up and try it again or do Abraham's name puzzle.

## Glitter Names!

This is another fun activity for little ones! They think their name is so special. They will enjoy seeing it looking glamorous!

### What You Need:

- Colored paper
- Thick black marker
- Glue
- Glitter

### How To Make It:

- Before class starts, write each student's name on colored paper with a thick black marker. Make one for 'Abraham' also so you can demonstrate what to do and connect back to Abram's name changing to Abraham.
- Students will trace the thick black letters with glue and then sprinkle glitter over top of them.
- Dump excess glitter over the trash can and lay flat to dry.

# Name Bracelets!

This trendy craft will allow students something memorable to wear home with them.

## What You Need:

- Bracelet leather or plastic(sold at craft stores)
- Letter beads (Make sure you have the letters for each child's name. Look in the 'Crafts for Kids' section of your craft store).
- Colored beads to fill in around name and make the bracelet decorative.

## How To Make It:

- Demonstrate to students how to lay out the design of their beads before putting them on the leather. Students will lay the beads out in the order they want them to appear on the bracelet.
- Next students will thread the beads onto the bracelet.
- Tie a knot at the end of the beads on each side so that the beads don't fall off when the student takes the bracelet on and off.
- Tie the bracelet onto each students arm with a simple knot.