



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Genesis 1 – 19 Sermon Series

Supports Session 12: Established

Sermon Title: “What’s in a Name?” (Genesis 17:1-8,15-22)

### Connection to Session 12

While the session discusses the Abrahamic covenant being established, the naming of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac shows an authority that Christians should understand and appreciate. This message will discuss the naming of the three in more depth, applying it to believers who call upon the name of Christ.

### Introduction/Opening

The publishing of baby name resources is a small but consistent niche industry in the United States. Many parents go to websites, buy books, and even watch YouTube videos in the hopes of finding that perfect, unique name they hope will “fit” their child. It’s just as much art as it is science.

Names are important to people. In the Bible, names often have signified roles, events, or even have served as object lessons to God’s people. Today, we are going to look at the names that God gave to Abram, Sarai, and their promised heir, Isaac. Even more importantly, we will take a look at the importance of the name every Christian holds on to and how this affects our place in this world.

### Outline

#### 1. The Promise of a Great God (17:1-4)

- a. Definition of a covenant.
- b. God’s promises in His covenant to Abraham:
  - i. “I will multiply you greatly” (v. 2).
  - ii. “You will become the father of many nations” (v. 4).
    1. He would become a physical patriarch.
    2. He would become a spiritual patriarch.

- c. The promise given to Abraham affects the world even today.
  - i. Believers are called to be a blessing to the nations.
  - ii. How?
    - 1. Being salt and light to the world around us.
    - 2. Being a people of peace in a fallen world.
    - 3. Loving God and loving our neighbors.

## **2. The Power of a New Name (17:5,15,19)**

- a. God gave new names to Abram, Sarai, and their promised son, Isaac.
- b. The giving of a name signifies authority.
  - i. Adam gave names to animals in the garden (Gen. 2:19-20).
  - ii. Parents give names to their children.
- c. Significance of each new name.
  - i. To Abram, God gave the name that reflected his new role in God's Kingdom: The name Abraham means "a father to many."
  - ii. To Sarai, God gave the name that reflected her new role in God's Kingdom: Sarah means "princess."
  - iii. Finally, Isaac, the name for the new child to be born a year later, means "He laughs or laughter."
    - 1. This name signified God's work in an amazing and miraculous way.
    - 2. "The laughter was an expression of God's blessing and their joy, and also a reminder of the aged couple's doubts."<sup>1</sup>
- d. Christians are given a new name when they come to Christ.
  - i. They are given the right to become children of God (John 1:12).
  - ii. The name of Christ is represented in a Christian's daily life.
- e. Christians are to advance the gospel through the name of Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: beginning and blessing*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 250.

- i. Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6).
- ii. Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12)
- iii. Jesus is the name above all names (Phil. 2:9).

## **Conclusion**

Much like Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, if you are in Christ, you have the name of a Christ follower. You are called to share Christ's name with others, to bring them to Him as you share the good news of Jesus Christ. And this is to be done until Jesus comes.

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