

The Change in the Name (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Willard Lyons teaches on the life of Abraham.

! I mean, you cannot but help find some good spiritual truth anytime you study the Word of God. But we saw those things in the last part of our study in Abram's life. But there's one focal point, remember. One thing we really want to focus on in our study, through the life of Abraham. I think it's vital for us from time to time to look back at our lives, to see what God's been doing in our life, and then consider where we fit in the scheme of God.

Where do we fit? We're not just members of Highland Park Baptist Church. God's got a purpose, right? He's got a purpose in our lives, for our lives, that He wants to accomplish through it.

[1 : 23] And so it's good for us to recognize and try to see where we fit in the purposes of God. And we see that, you know, thinking about what ultimately will God produce from us?

What is He doing in our Christian life? It's hard for us sometimes to even fathom the idea that God is that involved in our life.

But He is. And as I was thinking about this, I thought about Psalm 139. Turn there with me just a moment. We'll get off the track real quick here. All right.

Psalm 139. Remember the psalmist here. Beautiful picture of God's involvement in our lives. All right. David here writing and contemplating. I really think David contemplating what God is to him.

[2 : 26] All right. What God has been to him. And so he writes this. I'm going to read this out of the Amplified because it's so descriptive. He said, O Lord. Now notice the word Lord is Jehovah. All right.

O Lord, you have searched me thoroughly and have known me. You know my down sittings and my uprisings. You understand my thoughts far off.

You sift and search out my path and my lying down. And you are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue still unuttered.

But behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You have beset me and shut me in behind and before. And you have laid your hand upon me.

Your infinite knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high above me. I cannot reach you. Now, what do you think about when you put this all together here?

[3 : 23] David talking about God's involvement in his life or in his being, if you will. And when he says here, your knowledge is too wonderful for me.

It's high above me. I cannot reach you. What do you think of when you put it in that context? It's his thoughts about David. Yeah, the knowledge of David.

Have we really stopped to think, consider how thoroughly God knows us because he was there in the beginning with us?

Yeah, yeah. And when David says how magnificent, in essence, the thoughts of God are, I think, toward him and about him. Pictures for me that David gets a sense of what God sees him to become.

Yeah? Yeah. You know, I marvel at it. How many of you have done body work? You know, some of these guys that take these old cars and fix them up.

[4 : 34] Facebook has some pictures like that every once in a while. You see these guys taking these old cars out of these fields and rusted out and all that, taking them and going through the process of doing what they do to fix them up.

And the pristine condition they're in when they're finished. Yeah. Marvelous. I picture David seeing that in God here.

In what God sees to make him. And I think you and I need to recognize that, too. That God sees us and has a predetermined picture of what we're to be.

And he wants to make us. Amen? So, never sell yourself short about what God wants to do in you. Verse 7. Where could I go from your spirit?

Where could I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you're there. If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, you're there. If I take the wings of the morning or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall your hand lead me.

[5 : 40] Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me and the night shall be the only light about me, even the darkness hides nothing from you.

But the night shines as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to you. For you did form my inward parts and you did knit me together in my mother's womb.

I will confess and praise you for you are fearful and wonderful and for the awful wonder of my birth. Wonderful are your works and that my inner self knows right well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was being formed in secret, intricately and curiously wrought, as if embroidered with various colors.

I love that. Just like we're embroidered with these various colors. All right. In the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance.

[6 : 37] And in your book, all the days of my life were written before ever they took shape. When as yet there was none of them. Now explain that to me.

Okay. Dr. Mike. Explain that. Yeah. Yeah. How precious and weighty also are your thoughts to me, O God.

How vast is the sum of them. If I could count them, they would be more in number than the sand. When I awoke, could I count to the end?

I would still be with you. What a tremendous picture. Amen. So, as a result of that then, God has been dealing in the life of Abraham in a number of different ways.

Now recognize here. Throughout his life, as we've already seen some, God has been manifesting himself to Abraham. So Abraham could recognize some characteristics or attributes about Jehovah.

[7 : 43] Now, we see that and have begun to see that, those manifestations in the names that were ascribed to God in his dealings with Abraham.

All right. Now, let me ask you something here. We know that God called Abraham out because God's got a purpose for him. But why? Why?

What's the purpose in the manifestations of God to Abraham throughout his journey? Because they're vast. They're different each time. All right.

What are the purposes of those manifestations? If God's got a purpose in calling Abraham, what is Abraham going to need?

What better way to learn to trust God than to learn about who he is? And in who he is, how he relates to us and to our lives.

[8 : 42] Right? Yeah. So we can trust him more and more. So that's the manifestation. So it's good for us to see as we continue our travel through the life of Abraham to check all those manifestations out, to see exactly what it is God has become and is becoming to Abraham in each step of his journey.

And then likewise, it's good for us to search our own lives and see how God has related himself to us and what he's shown us about himself through our journey since the time we got saved.

Even, even I think before that. All right. But that's the main thing we want to focus on here is what God is becoming to us so that we can see and recognize what his purpose is for us and through us. All right. So what has God made himself to us in our Christian life? Where is he taking us? Where has what he's done through us?

How has he used us? And then what his purpose is for us if we can recognize that. So last year we saw God's call upon Abraham. God instructs him to go into a place that I will show you.

[10 : 04] So he begins that journey of following God to see where God's going to take him and where God's going to lead him. Now, as he begins that journey, God begins giving promises to Abraham.

Once he gets out of, out of Egypt and goes into Canaan. All right. The most important aspect of those promises is the reality that through him there's coming a redeemer.

A redeemer for the sins of the world and lost mankind. So, it was a journey through which he experienced God, learns more and more to trust him through all of life's circumstances. Now, remember, what we saw with Abraham is this. He learns to trust God, but that's a long process for him. All right.

He doesn't just automatically learn to trust him. One of the things we saw last time was, you know, sooner did God direct them into Canaan and they arrived in Canaan.

[11:09] Said, I'm going to take you throughout the land and let you see what it is that the famine hit. All right. Remember what Abraham and Sarai did? Went to Egypt.

All right. Went to Egypt. Remember what happened in Egypt? They came up with a plan, remember. In spite of their ignorance, in spite of their sin, in spite of their lack of trust, God blesses them.

For a while, Abraham learns a lesson here. Same lesson that we need to recognize. No matter what the circumstances, no matter how difficult things get.

We need never to abandon our faith and trust in God. And follow him. Seek him.

And his leadership, his direction through everything we face. Because sometimes it's not always easy to follow God. But it's necessary.

[12:19] Okay. And that's what Abraham begins to learn. But also, remember what happens in chapter 16, where we left off last year, or last time.

In chapter 16, 10 years has passed from the time that God made a covenant promise to Abraham. All right. 10 years. And they are still, I was going to say patiently, but I don't know how patient, waiting for God to bring the promise of that covenant.

In chapter 16, notice in verse 1 again. Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children. And she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold, now Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing. I pray thee, go in unto my maid. It may be that I may obtain children by her.

[13:29] And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband, Abram, to be his wife.

And he went into Hagar, and she conceived, and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. So, she conceives a child by Abram, with, under the guise of, hey, you know, we've got, for that covenant promise to come true, for it to be passed on, they're going to have to have a son.

She is, Sarai, unable to have children at this point. All right? So, again, after ten years waiting for the promise, nothing's happened.

So, Sarai says to Abram, Hagar's my handmaiden. Going unto her, she can conceive and bear you a son.

So, that that son, then, will be the one through whom the covenant can be continued. That's the idea there. All right? But remember what happens here.

[14:53] Look at verses 5 and 6. Strife comes between Sarai and Hagar, when Hagar comes to be with child. All right?

So, Hagar, because of the strife that's created there, she flees from her mistress, Sarai. Verses 5 and 6 of Genesis 16.

And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee. I have given my maid into thy bosom. And when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes.

The Lord judge between me and thee. Now, remember that. All right? Whose idea was this to begin with?

Sarai. Yeah. Now, what does she do? When she seems to be despised in Hagar's eyes, you know, we looked at the idea that Hagar, you know, felt all right.

[15:56] You know, she can't have a kid, but I can. And I've got, I'm bearing Abram's child. All right? So, I'm not, I'm not about to say, or not about to even pretend, that I know the emotional picture of women when something like that happens.

All right? You women know what that would be like. All right? Men, trust me. Don't even go there. All right?

All right. But she says, look what happens here. She said, my wrong be upon you. This strife between me and Hagar, it's all your fault, Abram.

Yeah. Yeah. So, God's going to have to deal with you about this. Yeah. How sweet that is. All right? Now, how did Abram respond? You remember? Hey. Sarah, behold, thy maid is in thy hand.

[17:07] She's your handmaiden. Do with her as you please. Okay? When Sarah dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

All right? So, Sarah undoubtedly just did some very harsh things toward her that caused Hagar to want to just get up and leave. And so, she does that.

All right? Later, Hagar gives birth to a son, names the child Ishmael, as God has instructed. Verse 11 of chapter 16, the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

All right? And the Ishmael is the idea that God hears. Now, recognize something that happens here. The episode in Egypt was one thing. It created some real danger for them, for Abram and Sarah, but God intervened in that.

All right? But now, look at this. It seems on the surface to be, all right, nothing more than, hey, a problem between two women, Sarai and Hagar.

[18:37] And God intervenes in the midst of that, too. But you realize how much farther that goes.

All right? That strife that Abram caused between Hagar and Sarai, his wife, and just the idea of him, which we went through all of this last time, that in the culture of the thing, it was not a problem for him to go into Hagar.

But still, in all of that, it's a failure of Abram to continually trust and follow God.

Have no indication here that Abram sought God about whether or not he should go into Hagar.

Once again, he took the matter into his own hands with the idea here of maybe this son, because we see this later on, maybe this son would be the one that God would use to continue on the covenant relationship and promises.

But you and I, even today, are seeing the results of what took place between Sarai and Hagar and Abram.

[20:11] Yeah. I don't know about you guys, but I'm really, I'm really keeping my eyes open and see how this thing shakes out. Amen.

And I ran in Lebanon in Israel. Yeah. And Gaza. All of those things. All of that stems from Ishmael.

Yeah. Yeah. Anyway, I'm not going to get any further than that. So, what's it tell us? All right?

Abram needed to learn.

God gives him an important lesson here that he needed to learn. And it's a lesson all of God's people need to learn, whether Jew or Gentile, Jew or the church.

no matter what the circumstance, again. No matter how long it takes to realize God's promises, we must continually be patient in waiting upon the Lord.

[21:13] All right? Now, are there any impatient people in here? But we need to learn to be patient.

Notice what James 5, verses 7 and 8 say. Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it until he receiveth the early and latter rain.

Be you also patient. Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Now, look at the picture there. Now, whatever it is that drives us crazy, if you will, I don't know about you, but for me, it's been the silly, ridiculous political ads on TV.

All right? But whatever it is, whatever issues of life that disturb us, that cause us grief, heartache, whatever, the key is this.

Be patient. So, what are we to be patient for? We're to always have our sight upon the reality that Jesus is coming.

[22:36] Amen? He's coming to take us away to be with himself. And that, that'll happen. Don't know when, but it's going to happen.

So, what we've got to do is keep our eyes on that reality. And as the scripture says, be patient unto the coming of the Lord.

Just be patient. Yeah. Let's open the door to chapter 17, just a moment if you will. This is at least 13 years later than where we left off in chapter 16.

And here God seals the covenant with Abram by giving him a new name and by establishing a symbolic token of that covenant relationship.

So, it says in verses 1 through 3 of Genesis 17, and when Abram was 90 years old and 9, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the almighty God.

[23 : 50] Walk before me and be thou perfect and I will make my covenant between me and thee and will multiply thee exceedingly. All right? Now, the covenant had been made with Abram for at least 13, 14 years, maybe even longer.

Yet Abram remained without any visible sign of its accomplishment. You know, because Ishmael is not going to be the guy. So, Jehovah now appears once again to Abram, being 99 years old at this point, 24 years after he began his journey out of Ur the Chaldees into Canaan, and 13 years after the birth of Ishmael.

At the establishment of the covenant, back in Genesis 15, 7, when God manifested himself to Abram, he manifested himself as Jehovah.

Remember, the definition we can use, the characteristics of Jehovah is that he's the holy, righteous, self-existent God, but that also he is a revealer of himself to man.

That's Jehovah. But notice here, God does something different, a new name. He said, I am Almighty God, El Shaddai, God, the Mighty One.

[25 : 32] El, of course, is always the indication of the word God. Shaddai is from the word Shadad, literally means to be strong. So, it describes Jehovah, the covenant God, as the one that has the power and ability to fulfill every aspect of the covenant that he's established.

So, get the picture here. Abram and Sarah took it upon themselves to try to arrange for Abram to have a son through Hagar, sons born.

But now, 13 or so years later, God appears to Abram as El Shaddai, God, the strong one.

All right? To say, hey, I've got the ability and power to make anything happen that I want to happen. All right? That's kind of the idea here. Now, God, the mighty one, I have the power to realize the promise that I've made.

[26 : 51] Even when it's outside of the order of nature, when that's not possible, when there's no prospect fulfillment through anything else, the powers of nature, anything else, I have the ability to make it happen.

All right? So, the name that Jehovah gives himself here was to be a pledge to Abram that in the fulfillment of that covenant, that fulfillment would take place through his wife.

He's going to show him that here in a minute. All right? Even though, as the book of Romans declares, his own body is considered to be dead, and the deadness of Sarah's womb as well, in spite of that, God can do what he established to do.

All right? And he's sovereign. He can do it any way he wants to do it. Now, now, it reminded me, when I was going back through this today, it reminded me, go over to Psalm 78.

Psalm 78. Good thing for us to remember. We are so sight driven, aren't we? Psalm 78, beginning in verse 1, give, give, ear, my people, to my law, incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

[28 : 32] I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. we will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of Jehovah, and his strength and his wonderful works that he hath done.

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying by bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law, and forgot his works and his wonders that he might show them.

Marvelous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zon. He divided the sea, caused them to pass through, made the waters to stand as a heap.

In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with the light of fire. He claimed the rocks in the wilderness, gave them drink as out of the great depths.

[30 : 15] He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most high in the wilderness.

And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Now look at verse 19. Yea, they spoke against God. They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

Can he do that? Behold, he smote the rock that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed. Can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the Lord heard this and was wroth, so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came against Israel because they believed not in God and trusted not in his salvation. Wow. Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? That was the question. And it was the question that had already answered in their minds and hearts, and that was no.

[31 : 25] But he did. He did. water from the rock, manna from heaven, flesh to eat. Let me ask you, how many are there men in particular that love meat?

Amen? Yeah, you love a big, nice, juicy ribeye, inch thick, smoked just right. Yeah? Yeah. Wouldn't you love to have one right now, Oscar? Yeah. Yeah. But what about manna from heaven?

Don't you think you could be satisfied with that when it's God that sent it? Amen? The key for us is this. Notice how God responds to that lack of trust and faith in God.

All right? God destroyed a lot of them, or some of them. He wants us to trust him.

[32 : 44] I think it would be good for us to go back and take a look in our lives and see the things that God has done.

The way he's provided for us in various times and circumstances of hardship and distress and done that in ways we would never even have thought of him doing it in those ways.

Yeah. Yeah. And recognize that if God can do that back then, he can do it again.

Amen? Yeah. Why would he not? Why would he not? Trust. Trust him because God can.

Now, we're kind of uncoupled here, but God goes on. He appears to Abram. All right? He doesn't just speak to Abram as before.

[34 : 01] Somehow he makes a manifestation. He appears to Abram here. Says, I'm El Shaddai. But I want you to notice he requires something of Abram here now.

All right? I am Almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect. All right?

Or, walk before me and be blameless. Amplified says, walk and live habitually before me and be perfect or blameless, wholehearted, and complete.

All right? Now, another question for you here. When you think about it in that sense, walk before me and be blameless.

Live habitually before me and be perfect or blameless, wholehearted, and complete. What is he showing Abram here?

[35 : 02] Think about it just a moment. God said, I'm El Shaddai. El Shaddai. I can do anything provide anything anyway, however I want to. So, don't worry about the covenant relationship.

Don't worry about that fulfillment of the covenant because I can make that happen and I will. But there's something else you need here, Abram. You need a work done within yourself that will enable you to be what you need to be as we go through establishing this covenant relationship.

All right? Abram, walk before me. Be perfect. Be blameless. How in the world am I going to do that? Look what he's already done. Twice. All right?

always recognize the necessity of spiritual growth within our lives if God's ever going to do with us what he wants to do.

Amen? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Now, recognize God does a lot of things with Abram and through his life. But the one ultimate purpose is yet to be realized.

[36 : 24] for even that to be established and done, something's going to have to happen within the life of Abram. All right?

And that is, I think, a spiritual development that will make him what he needs to be to be the father of many nations.

We'll pick up there, Lord willing, next time. Father, again, thank you for your loving kindness, for your goodness and grace to us, and for the privilege of just being together again to look into your word.

And now, Father, we thank you that more and more you show us who you are. And, Lord, I just ask that you, in doing that, will enable us to see how that relates to us, and how you manifest yourself to us, to be to us anything and everything we need in any and every circumstance.

So, Lord, enable us to see that, but more so, enable us to live that in a life that trusts you and follows you, no matter what the circumstances of life may be, that you might be glorified in us and through us by what you do.

[37 : 49] And we'll thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen. To learn more, visit us in person or see the website at highlandparkbaptist.net.