

IN THE BEGINNING GOD**The Promise-keeping God****Genesis 20:1—23:20**

*“...through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed,
because you have obeyed me.” Genesis 22:18*

Day 1: Read Genesis 20:1–18.

1. What very specific thing did God promise Abraham and Sarah? (Gen. 18:10, 14)
2. How does Abraham put the “seed” and the fulfillment of God’s promise in jeopardy right after he receives this promise from God?
3. How does God keep the “seed” safe? (vv. 3, 6, 7, 17, 18)
4. Abraham and Sarah lied about their relationship once before. What motivated them the last time? (12:13) How does Abraham justify the lie this time? (vv. 11–13)
5. Abraham seems to be spiritually adrift in this passage, but God uses him to bring healing to Abimelech’s household anyway. (vv. 7, 17) What does this say about God? (Ps. 103:8–14; 2 Tim. 2:13)

Day 2: Read Genesis 21:1–20.

6. Finally, at the age of ninety, Sarah gives birth to a son. How is this birth a supernatural event? (vv. 1, 2, 5, 7) Compare this with Rom. 4:18, 19.
7. Abraham calls his son Isaac, which means “he laughs.” Both Abraham and Sarah laughed when God first promised them they would have son (Gen. 17:17; 18:11–15). How is their laughter different now? (vv. 6, 7; Ps. 126:2, 3)
8. This blended family is headed for some major difficulties.
 - a. What is it about Ishmael that concerns Sarah? (vv. 9, 10; 16:12; Gal. 4:28, 29)
 - b. What is her concern about Abraham’s loyalties? (vv. 10–13; 17:18)
9. Hagar and Ishmael are sent away and wander in the desert. How does God continue to care for and bless the “natural” son of Abraham? (vv. 15–21)

Day 3: Read Genesis 21:22–34.

10. Abraham has now been living in the Promised Land for about forty years. He has settled in the south and Abimelech, his neighbor, feels the need to enter into a peace treaty.
 - a. What does this show about Abraham’s status, power and, reputation? (Gen. 13:2; 14:14–16; 20:7, 14–16)
 - b. What is the secret of his success? (v. 22)

11. Over these last forty years God has gradually been revealing himself and his character, which is reflected in the following five different Hebrew names of God. What do they mean and what do they reveal about God's character?
- a) El Elyon (Gen. 14:18, 19, 20, 22)
 - b) Adonai Yahweh (Gen. 15:2, 8):
 - c) El Roi (Gen. 16:13, 14):
 - d) El Shaddai (Gen. 17:1):
 - e) El Olam (Gen. 21:33):

What name would you give God that reflects how he has revealed his character to you?

Day 4: Read Genesis 22:1–19.

12. What is the shocking command that God gives Abraham? (vv. 1, 2) How does this command completely conflict with God's promises? (Gen. 21:12)
13. How does Abraham respond? (vv. 1–3)
14. During that seemingly endless three-day journey to Mt. Moriah, Abraham has time to work through every possible scenario in his mind. What is one thing that he's sure of? (v. 5)
15. The only way to get through this crisis is for Abraham to cling to what he knows of the character of God. What is one of the attributes that he is depending on? (Isa. 42:5; Ezek. 37:5, 6; Heb. 11:17–19)
16. In verses 8 and 14, God's character is revealed in yet another one of his Hebrew names: Jehovah Jireh. What does this mean for Abraham in the middle of this crisis?

Day 5: Read Genesis 22:9–24; 23:1–20.

17. Abraham is brought face to face with the wrenching agony of the possible death of his son. God steps in and provides a substitute. Many centuries later God would provide another "lamb" (John 1:29), who would die on this same mountain (See 2 Chr. 3:1.). What did Jesus' death accomplish for us? (Isa. 25:7, 8; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14–15; 1 Cor. 15:54–57)
18. What belief about God is at the very bedrock of both Abraham's and our faith? (Gen. 15:18; 17:7; Deut. 7:9; Ps. 145:13; Heb. 6:13, 14, 17–19a; 11:11)
19. Abraham passes this final test and so sets the standard for what true faith looks like for the Israelites and for us.
- a. After having studied the life of Abraham and this climactic chapter, how would you define what faith looks like?
 - b. Compare your answer to the definition James gives. (Jas. 2:21–24)
20. Abraham has been a constant nomad and has never bought land. How does he honor his life partner in her death? (23:1–4; 17–20)