

God of The Living

Matthew 22:32

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FOCAL Read Together {Matthew 22:32} **I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**

The Sadducees were fond of saying that you could not prove the resurrection of the dead from the Law of Moses. For this reason they taught that there was no resurrection, and that when people died they were just *dead*. Our Lord Jesus defeated their argument at the very root when He said:

Mark 12:26-27 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? {27} He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

God spoke to Moses at the burning bush saying "**I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**". The Lord didn't say "I was", but "I AM", as in "**I am presently their God!**" Since this statement was made in the writings of Moses (**Exodus 3:6**) Jesus told the Sadducees "**you do greatly err!**" **You are *wrong* for the Law of Moses does speak of the resurrection in the very words that God spoke to that wonderful old Prophet.**

Our God is the God of the Living - not of the dead. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all living, resurrected beings. God was actively their God, though they had passed beyond the veil of this life. In our God is life. In

our Savior there is life. The Bible tell us that **"in Jesus is life" (John 1:4)**. Our Lord stated **"I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10)**. He said **"Search the Scriptures, for in the Scriptures you read of eternal life. The Scriptures testify of Me. But you will not come to Me that you might have life" (John 5:39-40)**. Our Lord declared **"Whoever eats Me and drinks Me dwells in Me and I in Him. The Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, and he that eats Me shall live by Me" (John 6:54-57)**. And again, **"My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28)**.

Dear friends, *natural* life always moves from positive to negative. The child born into this world begins to age as soon as he leaves the womb. He starts life new, and then begins along a path that ends in physical death. Everyone, no matter how good or bad, moves along this same path. Everything in the natural world moves from positive to negative, from light to dark. The *supernatural* life, however, moves from negative to positive. God is life. **He is the God of the living, not the God of the dead.**

Jesus Christ came to this earth to give us *life*. He came to raise us out of the natural world and to make of us *supernatural* beings. Jesus Christ came to raise us out of the grip of enslaving sin and bring to everyone who believes in Him real and continuing life. **"God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He**

that hath the Son HATH LIFE, and he that hath not the Son HATH NOT LIFE (1 John 5:11-12). God is the God of the Living, not of the dead! Those who are born again by faith in Christ **have life**. They move from the negative to the positive. They are forever changed by the Lord Who loves them so.

1. Three Patterns Of Faith

FOCAL {Matthew 22:32} **I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. ...**

God reveals Himself to us through the Names by which He describes Himself.

God identifies Himself with many different descriptive names throughout the Scripture. Around 250 times He calls Himself "EL" or "God". When God is referring to Himself as in His Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) He uses the word "ELOHIYM". There are various Names that God uses of Himself to describe what He does for His people. For instance, the name EL SHADDAI literally means "God is all sufficient". Other similar names are JEHOVAH JIREH (meaning "The Lord will provide"), JEHOVAH ROPHE ("The Lord Who Heals"), JEHOVAH M'KADDESH ("The Lord Who makes whole"), or JEHOVAH SHALOM ("The Lords Who makes peace"). In our text today we see the Name of God compounded with the names of three men. God told Moses when He spoke to him from the burning bush, **"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"**.

Why did God choose to identify Himself as "**The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**" as opposed to the godly men **Abel, Enoch, or Noah**?

Throughout Scripture we see that God calls Himself "The God of Abraham" *seventeen times*. He calls Himself "The God of Isaac" *eight times*, and calls Himself "The God of Jacob" *twenty five times*. Yet not once does God ever call Himself "The God of Moses", "The God of Enoch", or even "The God of Noah". These men were all saved by faith in God.

Genesis 6:8 But **Noah found grace** in the eyes of the LORD.

Hebrews 11:5 **By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.**

Hebrews 11:4 **By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.**

These were good and godly men. Yet never do we see God saying "I am the God of Enoch". Why?

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all patterns of saving grace. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all

saved by faith apart from the Law of God by a personal encounter with God!

The Law came by Moses, and Moses was not given the Law *until 430 years after God saved Abraham (see Galatians 3:17)*. Salvation cannot be by the Law, and life cannot come to a person by keeping a series of commandments. How was Abraham saved? Was he saved by keeping a Law? No! The Law was not available to Abraham. In fact, God wrote the initial Old Testament Scriptures through Moses, and, as I said before, Moses did not minister until long after the time of Abraham. How was Abraham saved? Who was Abraham?

2. The Pattern Of Abraham

FOCAL {Matthew 22:32} I am the God of Abraham ...

ILLUSTRATE I saw a cute sign the other day hanging in a local restaurant. It said:

You and I is friends.
You laugh, I laugh,
You cry, I cry,
You hurt, I hurt,
You is lonely, I gives you hugs.
You jumps off a cliff, I will miss you.

The Bible tells us that **Abraham is the friend of God, and, more importantly, God was the Friend of Abraham**. When **King Jehoshaphat** prayed at the

dedication of the House of the Lord he said:

2 Chronicles 20:7 Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever?

When God spoke to rebellious Israel many years later He told them:

Isaiah 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

Abraham was God's Friend, and God was Abraham's Friend. But Abraham did not start out as the Friend of God. Abraham started out life as an idolater, a person who worshiped many false gods.

He was no different than anyone in Ur of the Chaldees.

Joshua 24:2-3 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. {3} But I took your father Abraham from the region beyond the Euphrates River, led him throughout the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants. I gave him Isaac,'^{HCSB}

When God first came to Abraham this man was a

HCSB Holman Christian Standard version of Scripture, used here for clarity

worshiper of others gods. In fact, when God comes to anyone to save them, it is generally true that we are worshipers of other gods. We may not want to admit this, but we all were worshipers of some type of god - self love, pride, power, money, sex - before we met Jesus Christ as Savior. No one is born loving God. We are born loving ourselves. We are born loving the earth, and the things of this world. As I said before we start out life positive, but we gravitate to the negative. The Bible tells us:

1 John 4:19 We love Him, because He first loved us.

The natural man starts out life fresh and new, and moves toward death and enslavement. God must reach out to us and draw us away from death while pointing us to life.

Here is the pattern of Abraham. We are all born sinners. We are all born chasing the things of **of Terah and of Nahor**. We love the things of this world, and embrace them willingly.

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

While we were *yet sinners*, and like Abraham wallowing in the things of this world, *Christ died for us*. God made a way to save us, just as He does with all who will believe. God takes the initiative with Abraham, and He took the initiative with us. Abraham was not a good man.

Abraham was not a remarkable man. Abraham was an unremarkable pagan, and unbeliever and a citizen of Ur of the Chaldees. God came to Abraham *the first time* and said to him:

The First Call Acts 7:2-4 **Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. {4} Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and DWELT IN HARAN: AND FROM THENCE, WHEN HIS FATHER WAS DEAD, HE REMOVED HIM INTO THIS LAND, WHEREIN YE NOW DWELL.**

Abraham moved, but only because Terah moved. He went to Haran - about two days southeast of Ur - *with his father Terah*. The Bible says:

Following Terah, Not the Trinity Genesis 11:31-32 **And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and THEY WENT FORTH WITH THEM FROM UR OF THE CHALDEES, TO GO INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN; AND THEY CAME UNTO HARAN, AND DWELT THERE. {32} And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.**

When God called Abraham the first time Abraham went two days southeast of Ur, and was headed *toward* Canaan, but never got to the Promised Land. You can't get to the Promised Land following man.

You cannot be **the friend of God** and dance to the

tune of humanity. Terah cannot command you, and Ur cannot hold you. As Jesus said, "**Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.**" (John 15:14). The Friend of God must follow God!

Though Abraham was out of Ur, he still had Ur all around him, for Terah his father and his pagan family were still with him. Dear friends, God loves everyone, and wants to save everyone who will believe in Him. You cannot, however, drag the world into Heaven with you. **If you want to be saved you must come out of Ur - even if it means leaving those you love.** You cannot be saved by following men. Abraham proved that he was not saved following the first call by *going back to Ur*. He went back to Ur and stayed there until God called him a second time. We read:

The Second Call Genesis 12:1 Now the **LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee...**

Here's the second call of Abraham - what will he do? Would he stay in Ur or would he go? If he was going to be saved he would have to turn his back on Ur and go where God told him to go.

Dear friends, you *cannot* be saved and stay in the same place you are spiritually. Salvation always goes from negative to positive. It always takes a person from dark to light, from down ward to upward.

What does the Scripture teach us? -

Mark 1:15 ... REPENT ye, and BELIEVE the gospel.

Repent - turn away from where you were. **Believe** - turn to God. God says "Follow Me, and I will make you".

Acts 3:19 REPENT ye therefore, and be CONVERTED, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Repent - turn from the world. **Be converted** - turn to God, relying solely on Him, and you shall be saved. Abraham could not be saved in Ur of the Chaldees. If he stayed in Ur he would stay a pagan, lost and without God in this world. When God called Abraham to follow Him, Abraham went. The Scripture says:

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and HE WENT OUT, NOT KNOWING WHITHER HE WENT.

When the second call came Abraham went. Abraham obeyed God, though he didn't obey Him perfectly. Abraham brought Lot his nephew with him, and this caused some problems. But once Lot separated from Abraham he went on to follow God all the way to Canaan.

ILLUSTRATE In order to be saved it is not necessary

to understand *theology* or *doctrine*. When you go to a surgeon to get something bad removed from your body, you don't ask him what procedures he's going to use. You don't discuss drug dosages. You just want this person to do the job - to fix you - to make you better. I remember at my last surgery the anesthesiologist asked if I wanted to be awake while he operated on my leg. I replied, "Why? Am I going to have to do any cutting?" It's his job to fix me, and my job to relax and count backward from a hundred as I go to sleep.

In the same way **Abraham believed God**. The Scripture says:

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

What was the start of Abraham's friendship with God? **Abraham believed God**. He had the type of faith where he moved when God said move. He didn't have to know exactly where God wanted him to be - he just went. His faith was imputed - put on his account - for righteousness, and Abraham was called the Friend of God.

On one of the many days that the self righteous, pseudo saved Pharisees and Scribes attacked Jesus, our Lord told them:

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced¹ to see my

¹ ἀγαλλίαω, Aorist Middle Indicative, (Pronounced *ag-al-lee-ah'-o*), was caused to to jump for joy, to rejoice exceedingly, be exceeding glad

day: and he saw it, and was glad.

What Jesus literally said was **Abraham was caused to jump for joy!** What caused him to jump for joy? **He saw Jesus' day. He saw the Messiah - God become Man - walking on this earth.** God spoke to Abraham and during that second call He allowed Abraham to see the Truth. He saw Jesus Christ, the **Great I AM:**

John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Surrendered to this earth. He saw God Almighty clothed as a babe in a manger in a place called Bethlehem. He saw True God - unlike the false gods his father Terah had taught him of - put aside His glory to live among us. He saw Jesus,

Philippians 2:6-8 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: {7} But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: {8} And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Among the pagans men sacrificed themselves to the gods to please the gods. When God revealed Himself to Abraham that old man was astonished, for here the True God sacrifices Himself to save those who are lost in sin.

The Son of God became the Son of Man so that sons of men could become Sons of God. This thought - that God loves us enough to give Himself for us - should make us jump for joy just as it made Abraham jump for joy.

Abraham was saved by faith in Jesus. He trusted the Lord, and moved when God called him that second time. Did Abraham move perfectly? No, but he moved in faith. He trusted in Jesus. I remember that great old song I used to hear momma sing:

**What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry,
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh what peace we often forfeit,
Oh what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry,
EVERYTHING to God in prayer.**

The beginning of life is to surrender to Jesus. **God is the God of the Living, not the God of the dead.** When God calls you to salvation you have the same choice that Abraham had. When Abraham was first called he ignored God and followed Terah. Once Terah died God called again. Have you given yourselves to Jesus? Have you, like Abraham, **seen Christ's day, and have jumped for joy.** God wants to be your friend, and wants you to claim Him as a Friend. He wants to laugh when you laugh, and cry when you cry. He wants to embrace you when you are lonely. But, dear friends, He will not

jump off a cliff with you. You must come to Him!

3. Those Who Are Saved Continue Following God If They Want To Be Blessed

FOCAL {Matthew 22:32} I am the God of Isaac ...

God is not just the God of Abraham, but He is also the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God is the God of the living. He is the Living God, and those whom He has saved live IN HIM.

The Chinese preacher Watchman Nee illustrated the Christian life this way:

ILLUSTRATE "I have a bus ticket here, and I put it into the pages of this book. Now I put the book into the fire and burn it. What happens to the ticket? Or I throw the book into the river. What about the ticket? Or again, I make the book up into a parcel, and take it to the Post Office and mail it to Europe. Where is the ticket now? You can answer each question with absolute assurance; and yet it is a fact that, once it was in the book, I did nothing more with the ticket as such. I did not send the ticket to Europe, I sent the book. Because the ticket is in the book, where the book goes the ticket must go. We (who are saved by faith) have been placed into Christ. When Christ was put to death, we died in Him, because we are in Him.

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that **our old man is**

crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Moreover, the work of God did not stop there, for the Lord Jesus arose and ascended to His right hand. Because we are in Christ Jesus, we also were made alive by Him, and raised, and are seated with Him in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:4-6 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, {5} Even **when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by (grace ye are saved;)** {6} **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus** ..[end quote]

We who are saved by faith in Christ are like the ticket in the book. We are in Christ. The Bible tells us:

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 **But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:** {31} **That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.**

Once you entered the Christian way of life by faith in Christ you were placed in Christ. You will be blessed if you abide in Christ.

John 15:4-5 **Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. {5} I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and**

I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

God has made many promises to the Christian. He made many promises to Abraham. One of the key promises that God made to Abraham was that He would bring forth life out of death. God brought forth life out of death when He led the pagan Abraham out of Ur into a new and living relationship in Him. God brought forth life out of death when He led the pagan of any age to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Is this the end of salvation? Absolutely not!

God saved Abraham. Abraham must follow God if he wants Isaac. Isaac is life out of death. Isaac is laughter out of mourning. Isaac is the produce of the resurrected life. Isaac would be a blessing to Abraham, and a blessing to others. Isaac will not come until Abraham listens to God. You will not be blessed and a blessing until you listen to God!

God is **the God of the Living, not the God of the dead**. If you expect to be blessed by God as a Christian then you must *follow God*. You must *wait upon God*, heeding His direction.

Abraham was not saved until he turned his back on Ur and went toward Canaan, obediently following God. We cannot be blessed in this life by *striving after things* as the world strives after things. We who are believers must be obedient to God. We must go where He says and do as He says. As we follow the life of Abraham we see that

- though Abraham is *saved* by faith, he is not *blessed* until he does what God tells him to do. When God called Abraham the second time He said **leave Ur, leave your family, leave you father and go where I tell you to go**. Abraham left Ur, but took Lot with him.

Dear friends, just as it was with Abraham, Lot has to go. **Don't expect to receive a LOT of blessing from God until you tell LOT to get out!**

We read

Genesis 13:14-17 And the LORD said unto Abram, AFTER THAT LOT WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: {15} For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. {16} And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. {17} Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

God will not give us more than we are capable of receiving. He will not give to us while we are grasping in disobedience. It was not until **Lot separated from Abraham and went into Canaan** that God blessed him. **"All the land that you see, I'll give it to you, Abraham! I will give you so many children that they will be as the dust of the earth."** This was not just the promise of the coming of the nation of Israel, for Israel

can be numbered. No matter how big God's Israel - the seed of Abraham - became, it could still be numbered. God promised Abraham that **his seed would be as the dust of the earth**. God was talking about a greater seed. The Bible says:

Galatians 3:6-8 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. {7} Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. {8} And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Those who believe in God as Abraham believed in God **are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham**. God would justify - declare righteous - the **heathen through faith**. Just as Abraham was an idolater God would reach other idolaters through faith. If you have been saved, then you have been saved in the same way that Abraham was saved. You had to turn your backs on Ur and follow God to the Promised Land. You had to follow God, knowing that He is the God of the Living, not of the dead.

Once Abraham was saved the Lord came to him and told him:

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

God is the God of the Living.

Abraham in Ur cannot be blessed. The Christian in the world cannot be blessed. **"Come out from among them, and be ye holy. Touch not the unclean thing. I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My Sons and Daughters (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).**

While Abraham was in Ur God couldn't bless him, but obedient Abraham would be both blessed as well as shielded. God takes care of His people. Abraham had to learn this lesson, and we need to learn this lesson. If you are born again, *trust God*. If you are saved by faith in Him, then **fear not, dear believer: God is your Shield. He is your protection. He is your Reward and your Inheritance.**

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

God is our Refuge and our Strength. We who are His by faith must learn to trust Him to provide our needs. Our job is to follow Him, His job is to protect us.

Psalms 62:7-8 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. {8} Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

As God spoke to Abraham the old man began to tell the Lord his greatest fear. He said **"Lord, I have no seed.**

You have given me no heir". God told Abraham:

Genesis 15:5-6 ... Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. {6} And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Abraham believed the Lord, and God counted it to him for righteousness. Abraham was saved, not by works, but by faith. He was saved by trusting in God to be his shield and his reward. Abraham believed in God. He turned from his own power and trusted in the Lord.

Oh dear Christian, would that you would trust in God. Would that we would all **believe God, and surrender to Him.** Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. But following his salvation Abraham did what all believers try to do: Abraham decided that he ought to help God out. You see, **Abraham believed God in Genesis chapter 15.** God made a covenant with Abraham

Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land

saying "**unto THY SEED I give this land of Canaan**". If God gave the land to Abraham's SEED then God was going to give Abraham SEED. Abraham would have many children by Sarah. **God would bring life out of death. Though Sarah was dead in her ability to bear a child, God would give her a child. Isaac would come.**

Just like Abraham, every believer tries to *help God out*. Dear friends, God didn't need our help to save us, and He doesn't need our help to bless us. Obey God!

Abraham did what so many believers do. Again, Abraham is "**the father of us all**" (**Romans 4:16**). In Genesis chapter 16 Sarah told Abraham:

Genesis 16:2 ... Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

Abraham listened to Sarah's voice rather than God's Voice. He decided to help God out, and thus was born Ishmael. **Ishmael cannot be the child of Promise. Ishmael cannot be Isaac. God is the God of the living, not of the dead.** We cannot help God, but we can obey God. Abraham was 86 years old when Ismael was born. Look at what the Scripture tells us:

Genesis 16:16 And Abram was fourscore and six years [86 years] old, when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Genesis 17:1 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.

Abraham was 86 years old when Ishmael was born. God

didn't speak to Abraham again until *he was ninety nine years old*. Listen Beloved, **for**

Thirteen years God was silent while Abraham raised Ishmael. Every day of those thirteen years Abraham looked at Ismael and thought, "Here is my Son. Here is where my blessing shall come from!" And God was silent. Day by day passed, and God was silent.

God would not receive Ishmael as Abraham's son. **God is the God of the Living, not the God of the dead. God is the God of Isaac.** Was Ishmael a cursed child? No, but he was a child of human works. He was not the Child that God promised. Ishmael was the work of Abraham's flesh, not the product of faith.

To prove this point to Abraham God let Abraham alone for *thirteen years*. In the thirteenth year of Ishmael God came to Abraham and said "**I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect**". Think about these words.

"I am the Almighty God²". God told Abraham. "**I am EL SHADDAI. I am the God of provision, the God of all Life. Not YOU but ME!**"

God was telling Abraham, "What you did in going in to Hagar and bringing forth Ishmael *did not count*. I am the God of Provision. **I am the God of the Living, not the**

2 שדי (Pronounced *shad-dah'-ee*), Shaddai, the Almighty (of God) + אל (Pronounced *ale*), God

God of the dead.

Up to this point in our sermon we have been calling the Father of Faith "Abraham". I do this out of habit. But Abraham was originally called "**Abram**", which means "**High or Exalted Father**". When God first called Abram to salvation He called him as "Exalted Father". There's a reason for this. The Bible teaches that every believer is to:

1 Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: {7} Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Abram would be exalted by humbling himself under the hand of God. He would be exalted by trusting God and believing God and doing as God told him to do. Abram tried to exalt himself by going in to Hagar, and by bringing forth Ishmael.

While Abraham lived life in his own power, exalting himself, he was "Exalted Father". Only when Abraham trusted God would his name be changed from ABRAM to ABRAHAM, "The Father of Many Nations".

That which comes from man's hand cannot be blessed. Ishmael is not the child of promise, he is the child of the flesh. **In Isaac shall thy seed be called (Genesis 21:12).** What can man do to bring forth life? Absolutely nothing! **Abram would be renamed Abraham - the Father of**

Many Nations - not by his own power but by God (Genesis 17:5). God told Abraham:

Genesis 17:5-8 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.**

"I am the El Shaddai. I will do - I will make - I will establish - I will give - I will be". It is God Who saves the believer out of Ur, and it is God Who keeps on blessing the believer who rests in Him. The Bible tells us in the Book of Galatians:

Galatians 4:28-31 Now we, brethren, **as Isaac was, are the children of promise.** {29} **But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.** {30} **Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.** {31} **So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.**

Isaac (his name means "Laughter") is the Child of

Promise. God promised to bring life out of death. He promised to make a mighty nation out of Abraham and Sarah. Abraham tried to help God, but God is not in Ishmael nor is He in Hagar. God is in Isaac.

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION CIRCUMCISION In order to emphasize the difference between Isaac and Ishmael the Lord gave Abraham something to do. Abraham kept trying to help God out. He kept trying to do things his own way. So God said, "You want to do something to help Me, then do this. Circumcise yourself, and all of the males within your household."

Genesis 17:10-11 **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 between me and you.**

What is circumcision? It is a *cutting away* of useless flesh. Abraham and all those who were circumcised did this to themselves, and then suffered several days afterward because of it.

Was a man saved apart from circumcision? Absolutely. In **Genesis 15** we saw that **Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.** He was saved more than *thirteen years earlier*, long before he got the bright idea of going in to Hagar to "help God out". God doesn't need our help, no more than do the children of God need circumcision. The New Testament

states:

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

We who are *born again by faith in Christ* have no confidence in the flesh, but we worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Jesus Christ. We are not of Ishmael, the work of man's hands, but we who are born again are Isaac, the Laughter and Rejoicing of God.

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

It is not by the works of our hands that we are saved, but by the works of His hands. It is not by a ritual cutting away of useless flesh that we are the Children of God, but it is faith in Christ that made us. We who are born again by faith in Christ are - like Isaac - children of promise. God has promised to bless us. He has promised to keep us. He has promised never to leave us. What a might God we serve! Our job is to wait on God, to do what His Word says, and to trust that Isaac will come in God's own timing.

4. God Changes Jacobs Into Israels

FOCAL {Matthew 22:32} I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

How do you change a frog into a prince? The fairy tales teach us that a pretty princess kisses the frog, and that turns him into a prince. The Bible, however, teaches that the only way we grow upward is by rejecting the world and clinging to God.

When we see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob we see a spiritual chain. If Abraham had never left Ur, then there would have never been an Isaac. If Abraham refused to trust God with his wife, then Ishmael and not Isaac would have been his firstborn. And if Isaac had never been born, neither would Jacob have been born.

Jacob is the son of Isaac and his wife Rebekah, the twin brother to Esau. The name **Jacob** means “**the one who undermines, the one who is sneaky**”, and this was Jacob's character. Like many people Jacob thought of himself first and foremost. The Lord had determined that He was going to bless Jacob, for the Scripture says:

Romans 9:8-13 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. {9} For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. {10} And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; {11} (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election

might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) {12} It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. {13} As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

God is in control. God was going to bless Jacob, and Jacob did not need to be a “supplanter” or an “underminer” to be blessed. If Jacob wanted to be blessed he needed to give his life to the Lord. He needed to trust the Lord Jesus Christ. He didn't need to seek his own blessing by enticing Esau into selling his birthright to him (Genesis 25:31 ff). Jacob didn't need to use underhanded methods to get Isaac to bless him rather than Esau. (Genesis 27:34-36).

It was God's plan to bless Jacob and to enrich his life. After betraying both his father and his brother Jacob went to Padan-aram to find a wife. Jacob spent the night at a place called Luz, and there he had a dream:

Genesis 28:12-15 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. {13} And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; {14} And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. {15} And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee

again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

God introduced Himself to Jacob, and called Jacob to salvation. Did Jacob come? Yes he did. Look at his words:

Genesis 28:20-22 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, {21} So that I come again to my father's house in peace; **THEN SHALL THE LORD BE MY GOD:** {22} And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Jacob believed on the Lord, and was saved. Was Jacob's life smooth from that point onward? No, not at all. Jacob had cheated Esau in order to bless himself. God allowed Jacob to be placed in a situation where he himself was cheated a number of times. Jacob served his uncle Laban for seven years in order that he might marry Rachel, only to have Laban substitute Leah in Rachel's place. Rather than turn to God in the midst of the trial Jacob schemed ever harder, seeking to overthrow Laban with his trickiness.

Yet God is the **God of Jacob, the God of the Living.** Though Jacob scarcely mentioned God in his early years, God sent trials his way to draw him to Christ's side. There is nothing accidental in the life of the believer, but everything that comes our way comes in order to make us what God wants us to be. It was God's will that Jacob

one day become Israel. The “**Supplanter and Underminer**” was destined to be changed into “**The One Who Prevails with God**”. God wants His people to be different from the world. We cannot win the world for Christ if we look like common. We cannot be a blessing to the world if we are no different from Laban. We must be God's.

Jacob was self willed. Though saved by faith, he chose to use his own means and his own power over and over again to live his life. Jacob would not be a useful vessel for the Lord until he was broken. At a place called **Peniel (which means a vision of God)** Jacob would meet the Lord and “wrestle” with him all through the night. The Bible tells us that “the man” that Jacob wrestled with

Genesis 32:25 ... touched the hollow of {Jacob's} thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

Jacob was powerless. He held on to “the man”, but with a dislocated thigh he could not wrestle any more. All Jacob could do was hold on to God. The Scripture teaches us that we who believe should take pleasure in weaknesses and infirmities. Rather than wrestle and worry over our limitations we should trust in the Lord, clinging to Him. The Apostle Paul learned from the Lord

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ... My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. {10} Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in

reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Jacob was crippled in his encounter with God, but he was also changed. His name became **Israel, for he clung to God:**

Genesis 32:28 ... Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Peniel is a turning point for Jacob. It is not where he becomes perfect, for Jacob commits many other errors. There are other times that he doubts God. But out of Jacob would come Israel. Out of Jacob God would bless the world. God will bless the world with you, dear Christian, if you will but trust Him.

At his beginning Jacob was a underminer and a supplanter. By the Grace of God he became Israel. In order that he go from what he was to what God wanted him to be he had to be broken. The same is true for every Christian who has ever served the Lord. Suffering is not a curse, but a blessing. Cling to God, and trust in His heart and His power.

Romans 8:28-32 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. {29} For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. {30} Moreover

whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. {31} What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? {32} He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

May God touch your hearts with His Word!



FOCAL Read Together {Matthew 22:32}
I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

(Mark 12:26-27; Exodus 3:6; John 1:4; John 10:10; John 5:39-40; John 6:54-57; John 10:27-28; 1 John 5:11-12)

1. Three Patterns of Faith

(Matthew 22:32; Genesis 6:8; Hebrews 11:5; Hebrews 11:4) _____

2. The Pattern Of Abraham

(Matthew 22:32; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; Joshua 24:2-3; 1 John 4:19; Romans 5:8; Acts 7:2-4; Genesis 11:31-32; John 15:14; Genesis 12:1; Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; Hebrews 11:8; James 2:23; John 8:56; John 8:58; Philippians 2:6-8) _____

3. Those Who Are Saved Continue Following God If They Want To Be Blessed

(Matthew 22:32; Romans 6:6; Ephesians 2:4-6; 1

Corinthians 1:30-31; John 15:4-5; Genesis 13:14-17; Galatians 3:6-8; Genesis 15:1; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; Psalms 46:1; Psalms 62:7-8; Genesis 15:5-6; Genesis 15:18; Romans 4:16; Genesis 16:2; Genesis 16:16; Genesis 17:1; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Genesis 21:12; Genesis 17:5; Genesis 17:5-8; Galatians 4:28-31; Genesis 17:10-11; Philippians 3:3; Galatians 6:15; Galatians 5:6) _____

4. God Changes Jacobs Into Israels

(Matthew 22:32; Romans 9:8-13; Genesis 25:31; Genesis 27:34-36; Genesis 28:12-15; Genesis 28:20-22; Genesis 32:25; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Genesis 32:28; Romans 8:28-32) _____

