

Bible Study Guide: Genesis 19–24

Overview

Genesis 19–24 continues the account of Abraham's life as God faithfully preserves His covenant despite human weakness, sin, and loss. These chapters reveal both God's holiness and His grace as He judges wickedness, protects the promised family, fulfills His promise through Isaac's birth, tests Abraham's faith, and providentially prepares the next generation to receive the covenant.

Throughout these chapters, God's promises move steadily toward fulfillment. Again and again, people fail, circumstances change, and obstacles arise, yet the Lord remains faithful to accomplish His purposes. The focus shifts from Abraham's life to the preparation of Isaac, demonstrating that God's covenant depends not upon human ability but upon His sovereign faithfulness.

Opening Question

Have you ever looked back and recognized that God was faithfully working through circumstances you did not understand at the time? How did that experience strengthen your trust in Him?

Genesis 19

Although Abraham had pleaded for the righteous in Sodom, the city's wickedness had reached its full measure. Two angels entered the city and were welcomed into Lot's home, where the men of Sodom surrounded the house and demanded that Lot surrender his guests so they could have sexual relations with them. Their intention was not merely to mistreat the visitors but to commit a violent act of homosexual assault. While Scripture identifies many sins associated with Sodom, this event demonstrates the depth of the city's moral corruption and helps explain why God's judgment had become inevitable. Before judgment fell, however, the angels urged Lot and his family to flee, revealing God's mercy in rescuing those connected to His covenant promises.

Lot's escape also reveals the danger of becoming attached to the world. Years earlier, Lot had chosen the fertile Jordan Valley because it appeared prosperous. Over time, he moved from living near Sodom to living within the city. Although Scripture later describes Lot as a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7–8), his prolonged association with Sodom had shaped both his priorities and his family. Even after being warned, Lot hesitated to leave, and the angels had to lead him out by the hand because of the Lord's compassion.

As fire and brimstone fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt, illustrating the danger of longing for a life God has called us to leave behind. The chapter closes with the tragic account of Lot's daughters, reminding us that although God graciously delivers His people, the influence of a sinful culture can leave lasting consequences.

Read Aloud: Genesis 19:15–22

Discussion Questions

1. How does God's rescue of Lot demonstrate both His justice and His mercy?
2. Looking at Lot's life, what are some subtle ways believers can become spiritually shaped by the culture around them?
3. Why do you think Lot hesitated when God provided a way of escape?

Genesis 20

After the destruction of Sodom, Abraham journeyed to the region of Gerar. Again, Abraham identified Sarah as his sister rather than his wife. Abimelech, the king of Gerar, took Sarah into his household, but before any harm came to her, God intervened by warning Abimelech in a dream. The Lord made it clear that Sarah was Abraham's wife and that His covenant purposes would not be threatened.

Although Abraham's fear led him to repeat an earlier failure, God faithfully protected Sarah and preserved the promised line through which Isaac would soon be born. God also identified Abraham as a prophet and instructed Abimelech to seek Abraham's prayer. After Abraham prayed, the Lord restored Abimelech's household, demonstrating that He would preserve His covenant despite Abraham's weakness.

Read Aloud: Genesis 20:1–7. 17–18

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Abraham once again identify Sarah as his sister?
2. Why do you think God chose to intervene directly rather than allowing Abraham to face the consequences on his own?
3. Why do you think God instructed Abimelech to seek Abraham's prayer, even after Abraham's failure?

Genesis 21

After years of waiting, God fulfilled His promise exactly as He had said. Sarah gave birth to Isaac, the son of promise, at the appointed time. Abraham named him Isaac, circumcised him on the eighth day, and Sarah's laughter of disbelief was transformed into joyful praise.

As Isaac grew, conflict arose between Ishmael and the promised heir. Though sending Hagar and Ishmael away deeply grieved Abraham, God instructed him to do so because His covenant would continue through Isaac. God also compassionately cared for Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness, providing for them and reaffirming His promise to make Ishmael into a great nation.

The chapter concludes with Abraham making a covenant with Abimelech at Beersheba. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree and worshiped the Lord, acknowledging His continued faithfulness in the land of promise.

Read Aloud: Genesis 21:1–7. Genesis 21:22–34

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God continued to show compassion to Ishmael even though Isaac alone would inherit the covenant?
2. Why do you think Abraham planted a tree and worshiped the Lord after making the covenant at Beersheba?
3. Looking back over Abraham's journey so far, where do you see God's faithfulness most clearly despite human weakness?

Genesis 22

Some time after Isaac's birth, God tested Abraham by commanding him to offer his beloved son as a burnt offering on one of the mountains in the land of Moriah. This was not a temptation to do evil but a test designed to reveal the depth of Abraham's faith. The promised covenant depended upon Isaac, yet Abraham trusted that God would remain faithful to His promises even when he could not understand His command.

As they climbed the mountain, Isaac asked, "**Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?**" Abraham answered with confidence, "**God will provide for Himself the lamb.**" At the very moment Abraham demonstrated his willingness to obey, the Angel of the Lord stopped him. Instead, God provided a ram to be offered in Isaac's place. Abraham named the place "**The LORD Will Provide**" (**Yahweh-jireh**). Centuries later, this same region would become the site of Jerusalem and the temple. Some Bible scholars have also suggested that the mountain where Abraham offered Isaac would later be named **Golgotha**, the location where God did not spare His own Son but offered Him as the perfect sacrifice for sin. While Scripture does not explicitly identify the exact location, the connection beautifully illustrates God's unfolding plan of redemption.

Following the test, the Lord reaffirmed His covenant with Abraham, declaring that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his offspring. Abraham's obedience revealed a faith that rested confidently in God's character and promises.

Read Aloud: Genesis 22:1–8

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God tested Abraham after so many years of seeing his faith grow?
2. What do you think Abraham understood about God that enabled him to obey such a difficult command?
3. Abraham declared, "**The LORD will provide.**" How have you seen God provide what was needed, even when the solution was not what you expected?

4. Why is it important to remember that God's tests are designed to strengthen and reveal our faith rather than to cause us to fail?

Genesis 23

Following Sarah's death at the age of 127, Abraham mourned for his wife and sought a permanent burial place in the land of Canaan. Although God had promised the entire land to Abraham's descendants, he did not yet own any of it. Rather than accepting a gift from the Hittites, Abraham insisted on purchasing the cave of Machpelah for its full price, establishing his legal ownership of the property. This purchase marked the first piece of the Promised Land that Abraham possessed.

Read Aloud: Genesis 23:17–20

Discussion Questions

1. Why was it important that Abraham purchased the burial site instead of simply accepting it as a gift?
2. How did Abraham's purchase of a burial place express faith in promises he would never see fulfilled during his lifetime?
3. How can God's future promises give believers hope during seasons of loss and sorrow?

Genesis 24

As Abraham grew old, he recognized that God's covenant would continue through Isaac. Determined that his son not marry one of the Canaanite women, Abraham sent his trusted servant back to his homeland to find a wife from among his relatives. The servant prayed that God would clearly direct his steps, and before he had finished praying, Rebekah arrived and fulfilled the very sign he had requested.

Recognizing God's providence, the servant immediately worshiped the Lord. Rebekah and her family likewise acknowledged God's leading, and Rebekah willingly left her home to become Isaac's wife.

The chapter concludes with Isaac receiving Rebekah as his wife. Their marriage preserved the covenant line through which God would continue His redemptive plan.

Read Aloud: Genesis 24:12–27. Genesis 24:62–67

Discussion Questions

1. What does the servant's prayer teach us about seeking God's guidance when making important decisions?
2. Why do you think the servant stopped to worship before he knew how everything would turn out?

3. What qualities in Rebekah demonstrate a willingness to follow God's leading, even when it required significant change?
4. Looking back over this chapter, where do you see God's providence at work in ways that might have seemed ordinary at the time?

Seeing the Gospel

Genesis 19–24 advances God's plan of redemption by demonstrating that His covenant rests entirely upon His faithfulness. Despite human failure, fear, loss, and testing, God continues to preserve the family through whom He has promised to bless all the nations of the earth. Nothing can prevent the Lord from accomplishing His redemptive purposes.

These chapters also reveal one of Scripture's clearest foreshadowings of Christ. On Mount Moriah, God spared Abraham's beloved son by providing a substitute in his place. While the ram could not remove sin, it anticipated the day when God would provide the perfect sacrifice through His own Son. Abraham's declaration, "**The LORD will provide,**" ultimately finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who died in the place of sinners.