



MESSAGE GUIDE

JANUARY 12, 2025

EVERY NAME HAS A STORY- PART-2



MATTHEW 1:1-2; GENESIS 12:4-9; 17:1-14

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Welcome to week two of our series, Every Name Has a Story. This year we're using Jesus' genealogy from Matthew 1 as a template to do a deep dive into the flow of Old Testament history leading up to the birth of Jesus.

We're looking at the names of people in Jesus' family tree—the good, the bad, and the ugly—to learn more about Jesus' story and how it intersects our story. Why? Because Your story matters. When your story intersects Jesus' story, it becomes part of God's story for all eternity. It matters!

Right in this first verse of Matthew's Gospel, we see the outline of the genealogy Matthew records, and this is what will give us our structure through the year. Three parts:

- Part One: Abraham to David (Matthew 1:1-6a)
- Part Two: David to the Babylonian Exile (Matthew 1:6b-11)
- Part Three: The Babylonian Exile to Jesus (Matthew 1:12-16)

So, we begin with Abraham. *“Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers”* **(Matthew 1:2, ESV).**

There is much we could say about Father Abraham and his many sons. We could talk about how Abraham was blessed by God to become a blessing to all people. God said in Gen. 12— *“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”* **(Genesis 12:2-3, ESV).**

We could talk about how this promise was repeated in Genesis 22:18, and we could talk about how these promises given to Abraham were fulfilled in Jesus. We see this in Paul's words to the churches in Galatia: *“Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ”* **(Galatians 3:16, ESV).**

We could expand on the story of Abram and Sarai's move from Haran to Canaan **(Gen. 12:4-9).**

We could spend a lot of time looking into Abraham's background, faith, his journeys, his mistakes and blunders, his triumphs and victories. But we are going to home in on is right where Genesis 12:4 starts: *“So Abram went...”* **(Genesis 12:4a, ESV).**



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Abraham's story begins with his name, just like Jesus' story in Matthew 1 begins with His name, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ" (**Matthew 1:1a, ESV**).

1. EVERYONE'S STORY STARTS WITH A NAME. HOW WOULD YOU START YOUR STORY? MY NAME IS _____. AND THEN YOU MAY CONTINUE WITH A LITTLE MORE INFORMATION: I WAS BORN ON ____ (MONTH), ____ (DAY), ____ (YEAR) IN THE TOWN OF _____.

Our stories begin with an identification of whom the story is about. But notice that Abraham's story doesn't even begin with the name "Abraham." Gen. 12:4 gives the name "Abram," but later he is known as "Abraham." Seems like a small detail, but it's little details like this in Scripture that we can gloss over, and it doesn't seem like we'd lose a whole lot. But we sure can miss a lot of the story if we gloss over something that God Himself initiates.

Abram's name change wasn't because someone decided that "Abraham" sounded a little more prestigious than "Abram," or because it was easier for Abram's grandson to say "Abraham," and so that name stuck, and everyone started using the same name from that point forward. An insignificant change to someone's name means little to their identity and purpose. But if God makes the change, it is no longer insignificant.

2. WHAT IS SOMETHING ABOUT YOU (YOUR IDENTITY), THAT SOME MIGHT THINK IS INSIGNIFICANT, THAT GOD HAS CHANGED?

Let's see how Abraham's story plays out in Scripture. **Read Genesis 17:1-9.**

234 times the name Abraham is listed in the Bible. The very first time Abram is called Abraham is when God calls him that right here in Gen. 17:9. So, why is this a big deal? We see name changes all the time. But remember the key idea: An insignificant change to someone's name means little to their identity and purpose. But if God makes the change, it is no longer insignificant.

So, maybe what we read about Abram's name change is not insignificant...and maybe there's a life application packed in there for us as well.



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When God changes your name...it signifies a change of identity: “Behold, my COVENANT is with you” (Genesis 17:4, ESV). A covenant is an agreement. In the ancient near-eastern context, covenants were understood as binding agreements between two parties that were often sealed with a ritual or ceremony. In this case a rather significant and permanent seal according to vv.10 and following, the seal of circumcision of every male. The point is—a covenant with God is the most significant thing that ever happened to Abraham and to his descendants.

God changed Abraham’s name, because He was covenanting with him. He was entering into a new relationship with Abram—and God said, “I’m changing your name, because I’m changing who you are. You are no longer separated from Me. You are covenanting with Me. You are part of MY family. I am giving you a new identity!”

Has God changed your name? When we are baptized in the NAME of Jesus Christ, we are given a new identity. We are covenanting with God. We are no longer separated from God. We are part of His family. And get this: Just as circumcision was the sign of the old covenant that started here in Gen. 17, baptism is the “circumcision,” or the sign of the new covenant: *“In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:11-12, ESV).*

This is why we don’t gloss over baptism as some unimportant church ritual, nor do we elevate it as some type of work of salvation. Medically, circumcision is a work done to you, and it requires total surrender, especially for an adult! Likewise, baptism is a work done to us, and it requires total surrender. Paul says, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27, ESV).*

3. HAVE YOU SURRENDERED YOUR LIFE IN COVENANT WITH GOD THROUGH IMMERSION BAPTISM? IF NOT, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

When we put on Christ, we are a new creation We have a new identity. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV).*

And we are given a new name! Isaiah prophesied about it: *“The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give” (Isaiah 62:2, ESV).*



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And Jesus proclaimed it: *“To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it”*

(Revelation 2:17, ESV).

And what is this new name? Well, a little later in Revelation, Jesus says, *“The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name”* **(Revelation 3:12, ESV).**

God writes HIS name on us, the name of HIS city, and HIS own new name. In other words, He claims us—He wants us—He welcomes us and gives us a new identity. We become a new person.

God wants to give you a new name. No longer will you be called, Sinner, or Screw up, or Disappointment, or Failure or Insignificant, or Loser, or Mistake, or Nothing. In Jesus, God calls you Son or Daughter— *“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith”* **(Galatians 3:26, NIV).**

4. DO YOU WANT A NEW NAME? WHAT STEPS ARE YOU READY TO TAKE; TO BE MADE NEW, TO BE MADE WHOLE, TO HAVE A NEW IDENTITY OF FREEDOM WHERE THE OLD YOU IS GONE AND THE NEW YOU HAS COME?

NEXT STEPS:

- If you would like to explore further what it means to be given a new name, text “NEW” to 317-707-6462, and we’ll reach out to you.
- If you would like to get into a community of people who are on the journey of faith in Jesus Christ, text “JOURNEY” to the same number, and we’ll reach out to you.

