

SEPTEMBER WEEK ONE: ISAAC

Monday

Genesis 15, 17:1–19

Abram was a man who was faithful to God. Abram had left his home and followed trusting God. One day, God spoke to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” Abram asked what reward he would receive, since he did not yet have any children, even though God had promised him he would have many children. So God led Abram outside and told him to count the stars. Of course, there were too many stars to count. God said that this was how many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren Abram was going to have. Abram trusted what God said, and Abram’s trust in God’s promises was “credited to him as righteousness.”

Later, when Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him again and changed Abram’s name to Abraham. Abraham means “father of a multitude (or a great crowd),” and that’s what Abraham would be – the father of many nations as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sands on the sea! God said, “I will establish my promise between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting promise, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.”

God changed Abram’s wife Sarai’s name to Sarah. Sarah means “princess.” And God promised that kings would come from their offspring together. (That would later come true as every king of Israel was from their family line.) Soon, Abraham and Sarah would have a son, even though Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah was 90! God told Abraham to name his son Isaac, which means laughter, because Sarah had laughed when she heard that she would have a child at such an old age.

God kept his promises to Abraham and Sarah. Many years later, God’s promised Savior (Jesus) would be one of Abraham and Sarah’s descendants. He would become the King of kings and the Savior of all who trust in him. For all of them, too, that trust is credited to them as righteousness, which makes them forgiven and perfect in God’s eyes, all because of their faith that trusts his promises. This Savior, Jesus, came to suffer and die on the cross for our sins. And he rose from the dead two days later as our shield and very great reward – victorious over sin, death, and the devil.

Close with prayer

SEPTEMBER WEEK ONE: ISAAC

Tuesday

Genesis 18:1–15

One day, as Abraham sat at the entrance to the tent where he lived, the Lord appeared to him. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing in front of him – one of them was the Lord, and the other two were angels.

Abraham ran to meet them. He invited them to stop, rest, and eat before going on.

Sarah, Abraham's wife, made bread. Abraham and his servants prepared meat, cheese, and milk. He served the food to his guests. They sat down under a big tree and ate.

While they are, they said to Abraham, "Where is Sarah your wife?"

"She is in the tent," answered Abraham.

The one who was the Lord said that he would come again in about a year and Sarah would have a son.

Sarah heard this, but she did not believe the Lord, because she was so old. In fact, Sarah laughed at the Lord's words.

The Lord knew that Sarah had laughed and asked, "Why did Sarah laugh?" He asked why she didn't believe the Lord's promise that she would have a child, even in her old age. Then God asked, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

God's promise came true. About a year later, Abraham and Sarah's son was born. His name was Isaac, which means "laughter."

Many years later, another son would be born from Abraham and Sarah's family. That baby son was also God's Son, who would become a human baby to save God's people from their sin. A baby with a father 100 years old is amazing. But a baby whose Father is God is even more amazing. Through that baby, Jesus, all the families of the earth would be blessed, as God had promised Abraham.

- **Can you think of some other "impossible" things that God did in the Bible and in your life?**

Close with prayer

SEPTEMBER WEEK ONE: ISAAC

Wednesday

Genesis 22:1-14

The Lord kept his promise he had made to Abraham and Sarah, and Sarah had a son when she and Abraham were very old. They named him Isaac, and he grew up to be a fine boy. Isaac was their only child together, and Sarah and Abraham loved him very much.

One day, God tested Abraham. God told Abraham to take Isaac, his only son whom he loved, and go to a mountain God would show them. There, in the land of Moriah, God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering.

Abraham got up early the next morning, saddled his donkey, and cut some wood – and together with Isaac and a couple servants, they started out for the place where Abraham was to offer his son.

It took three days, but finally they were almost there. Abraham gave the wood to Isaac to carry, while Abraham carried the knife and told the servants to wait for them to return. Isaac saw that there was everything for making a fire, “but,” he asked, “where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”

Abraham and Isaac continued walking until they came to the place that God had said. There Abraham built an altar and put the wood on it. Then Abraham laid Isaac on the wood and took out his knife to slay and sacrifice his son.

Suddenly the angel of the Lord called out to Abraham from heaven, telling him not to kill Isaac or do anything to harm him. “Now I know that you fear God,” the Lord told Abraham, for “you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”

Just then, Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham offered the ram as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place “The Lord Will Provide,” because God had provided the ram for a sacrifice in Isaac’s place, just as Abraham had told Isaac.

Many years later, God would send his own Son to be born from Abraham’s family and sacrificed in the same spot where God had told Abraham to go with Isaac. God’s very own Son, Jesus Christ, would be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who trust in him. So now we know that God loves us, because he did not withhold his Son, his only Son, whom he loves, from us.

- **Even though Abraham didn’t understand or life what God said, what did Abraham do?**
- **How does God test your faith as you follow him?**

Close with prayer



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SEPTEMBER WEEK ONE: ISAAC

Thursday

Genesis 25:19–34, 27:1–40

Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. They had not just one, but two babies – twins! God said that the older twin would serve the younger one.

The firstborn was named Esau. Esau was kind of red in color and he had a lot of hair. He had hair on his head, face, chest, back, arms, and legs. His brother was born right away after him, holding onto Esau's heel. His name was Jacob.

Esau enjoyed the outdoors, while Jacob preferred to stay home. Isaac, their father, loved Esau since he brought him meat. But Rebekah, their mother, loved Jacob since he stayed home and spent time with her.

One day, when the boys were older, Esau came in from the field very hungry, and he found his brother Jacob cooking stew. Esau asked for some, and Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." The birthright was that Esau had was that he was entitled to twice as much inheritance as Jacob was, because Esau was the firstborn son. For this family, the birthright also included carrying on God's promises to Abraham that his descendants would be great.

But Esau was so hungry that he didn't even care about his birthright. And so he sold it to his brother Jacob for a bowl of stew.

Many years later, when Isaac was so old he could no longer see, he called Esau to him. Isaac asked Esau to go hunting, and to prepare a delicious meal from what he caught. "Bring it to me so that I may eat," Isaac said, "that my soul may bless you before I die."

Rebekah heard what Isaac said. When Esau went to hunt, Rebekah told Jacob to get two goats from the flock, so that she could cook a tasty meal. Then Rebekah told Jacob, "You shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies."

Jacob said to his mother, "My brother Esau is a hairy man," but Jacob's skin was smooth. Jacob knew Isaac would be angry if he discovered that Jacob was trying to trick him. But Rebekah had a plan. She took some of Esau's clothes and put them on Jacob. And she put the hairy skins from the goats on his hands and neck.

Jacob brought the food Rebekah had prepared to his father. "Who are you, my son?" Isaac asked.

Jacob lied and said he was Esau. Jacob didn't sound like Esau, so Isaac asked him to come near so he could touch him. When he felt the goatskins, Isaac was puzzled. This person sounded like Jacob, but he felt like Esau.

"Are you really my son Esau?" Isaac asked.

Jacob answered, "I am." Isaac ate the food Jacob had brought, and he blessed him with the blessing he had for his firstborn son.

As soon as Jacob left his father, Esau came in from hunting. He, too, prepared a meal for his father, asking for his blessing. But it was too late – the blessing for the firstborn son had already been given to Jacob!

Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob all sinned – just like all of us. Yet God uses even human sin to carry out his plans. God was faithful and kept all his promises that he first gave to Abraham. Jacob's family inherited the Promised Land. And one of Jacob's descendants was God's very own Son, Jesus Christ, the Savior promised long ago.

- **Does God still keep all his promises, even when people sin?**

Close with prayer

SEPTEMBER WEEK ONE: ISAAC

Friday

Genesis 31:3, 32:1–33:20

After Isaac and Esau were angry at Jacob for tricking them, Jacob left and went to live with his uncle Laban. While Jacob was living with Laban, he got married and God blessed him with many children, with large flocks, and with many servants. One day, the Lord told Jacob to return to the land where his father lived. It wasn't easy for Jacob to go home. Many years before when Jacob made Esau so angry that he said he wanted to kill Jacob, so Jacob was afraid of Esau. Now God told Jacob to go home and promised to be with him. Still, Jacob wondered if Esau would ever forgive him.

When Jacob got near his homeland, he sent messengers to Esau. Now that Jacob was coming home, he wanted to be at peace with his brother. But the messengers came back with frightening news; Esau was coming to meet Jacob with 400 men!

When Jacob heard this, he was afraid that Esau was coming to attack him. Jacob made a plan to save his family. He divided his family and herds into two groups. He thought if Esau attacked one group, the other group could escape. Then Jacob prayed to God. Jacob thanked God that he had always been with him. He thanked God for all the blessings he had given him. Jacob told God he did not deserve even the smallest of all the good things God had done for him. Then he asked God to protect him from his brother.

Then Jacob sent goats, sheep, camels, cows, and donkeys as a gift to Esau. Jacob hoped that all these gifts would make Esau so happy that he would forgive him. Next Jacob also sent his family and everything else he had across the stream – so that Jacob was all alone.

That night God came to Jacob in the form of a man. Jacob physically wrestled with God all night long. Finally, in the early morning, God told Jacob to let him go. Jacob answered, "I will not let you go until you bless me." The wrestler (who was God) agreed and blessed Jacob with a new name. Now Jacob would be called Israel, which means "struggled with God." Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."

After the struggle, Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob went ahead of his family, bowing to the ground seven times until he came to his brother. Esau ran to meet Jacob, and hugged him. Esau was happy to see Jacob, and the two brothers cried for joy.

Then Esau wanted to know why Jacob had sent the herds and servants. Jacob told him they were gifts. If Esau was truly glad to see him, he should keep the gifts. Jacob was so glad to be at peace with his brother again that he insisted that Esau keep the gifts.

Esau accepted Jacob's gifts and Jacob went to the land of Canaan to begin a new life with a new name in a new place – and with all the blessings that God had given him. The same peace and joy that Jacob felt from his brother, you can feel from God, because you know he has forgiven you.

- Did Jacob deserve God's blessing and all God's good gifts to him?
- Do we deserve God's good gifts to us?
- How did Jacob react to the forgiveness he received from his brother?
- How do you react to the forgiveness you receive from God?

Close with prayer