

April 5th, 2020
God Tests Abraham
Genesis 22:1-19

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Mar 29	1 Sam. 9-12	Apr 2	1 Sam. 21-24
Mar 30	1 Sam. 13-14	Apr 3	1 Sam. 25-27
Mar 31	1 Sam. 15-17	Apr 4	1 Sam. 28-31
Apr 1	1 Sam. 18-20	Apr 5	2 Sam. 1-3

Lesson Introduction: Last week we saw how Abraham and Sarah were finally given a son by God, just as He had promised them many years before. Shockingly, this week we will see how God called on Abraham to sacrifice the very son that He had provided for him! As we study, we will learn what it means to truly place our faith in God and will see how God always remains faithful to us. Lastly, we will consider how the events of this passage point to God's plan to deliver us from our sins through Christ, His only Son.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:

- **To be faithful is to take God at His word (V. 1-10, Hebrews 11:1)**
- **The Lord is faithful to keep His promises, and to provide for all our needs (V. 11-19)**
- **Christ is our perfect sacrificial Lamb**

Discussion Section 1: The Faith of Abraham

Read Genesis 22:1-10

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them

together. 7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.

-What is God emphasizing in V. 3?

-How do we see Abraham's faith at work in this passage?

-Why was Abraham so quick to obey God?

Note: It's hard to imagine what must have been going through Abraham's mind. God had been so faithful to Him up to this point, and finally provided the son that He had been promised many years before. In verse 3 God is emphasizing the value that Abraham placed on Isaac by calling him "**your only son, whom you love.**" Suddenly, God is telling him to sacrifice that same son! Abraham surely had questions, doubts, and fears. This was the promised one, his only son, whom he loved. Yet in this passage, we see no fear or trepidation, Instead, we see a man who reacts in faith at every turn.

Keep in mind that Abraham is the same man who we have seen do some faithless things. He lied about his wife being his sister in order to protect himself (**Gen. 12:10-20**), and faithlessly took Hagar to be his wife so that he could be sure he would have an heir (**Gen. 16:1-4**). Throughout Abraham's story we have seen a man who, though having faith in God, has wrestled with a lot of doubt. But in our passage today, it is displayed clearly through Abraham what true faith in God really looks like.

Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "**faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**" This kind of faith clearly displayed though Abraham in our passage this week. He was sure of things hoped for and convicted of things not seen because he knew what the Lord had promised. The hope that Abraham had then, was nothing to do with himself and everything to do with God. Having faith is not a work that we produce, rather, it is a complete surrendering of self and complete belief that God will do what He has said He will do. Thus,

Abraham was faithful because He knew that God had promised him a son and promised to make Him a great nation. Abraham knew that he could absolutely believe that these things would remain true because God had said them. There may be times in our lives where things seem off. We cannot always tell what God is up to, but we can know that He is good, and His promises are true. We exercise faith by simply believing what He says is true and trusting Him to keep His promises.

Discussion Section 2: The Faithfulness of God

Read Genesis 22:11-19

11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

15 And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

-Why did God test Abraham?

-What do we learn about the way God deals with His children from this passage?

-How has God provided for you in times that seemed dire?

Note: It may seem strange to us that God chose to test Abraham in this way. Why would God promise a son, provide that son, and then ask Abraham to sacrifice that

son? Was God just playing some kind of cruel game with Abraham? It may be hard for us to grasp why God would ask Abraham to do such a thing, but it is vital for us to remember as we look at this, that God always has the good of His children in mind. The thing that is best for His children always, is that they would love Him above all else (**Romans 8:28, Philippians 3:10-14**).

As God tested Abraham, He was also teaching Him. Abraham had a history of trying to take things into his own hands (**Gen. 12:10-20, Gen. 16:1-4**), but here he was made to place his trust completely in God. Abraham learned that God provides even when things do not look good. He learned that God is faithful to His promises. He learned that God is all he needs. It is good for God to test us through trials, because in testing us, He teaches us to trust Him. There is nothing better for us as His children, than to learn to trust and rest in Him. Consider trials that the Lord is testing and teaching you through right now. Praise God that He tests us for our good, that we might learn to rely on Him fully (**2 Cor. 1:8-11**).

Discussion Section 3: A Picture of Things to Come

-In what ways does this passage point us to God's plan to redeem the world through Christ?

Note: There is so much imagery throughout this passage that should remind us of God's plan to redeem the world through Christ. At the beginning, we see that God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only Son, whom he loves (**V. 2**). Just as Isaac was the promised one, born miraculously, and the only son of his father, so too was Christ (**John 3:16**). We also see Christ reflected through Isaac in the submissiveness that he shows to his father in this passage. Most commentators believe Isaac to have been a young man (probably 18 or older) at this point. He could have easily overpowered his old father, but instead he submitted to his will. Similarly, we see Jesus willingly go to the cross. He could have commanded angels to defend him, but instead He submitted Himself to the will of His Father (**Matthew 26:53, Luke 22:42**). We continue to see Christ reflected in Isaac as we learn that Isaac carried the wood to the place where He would be sacrificed (**V. 6**), just as Jesus carried His own cross to Golgotha (**John 19:17**). Finally, we see Christ reflected in the sacrificial lamb that was found in the thicket. Just as the lamb was the replacement for Isaac, so Christ has stood in our place, and has borne the wrath that we deserved, that we might be made free (**1 John 2:2, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21**)!