



Genesis 22: The Lord Will Provide

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

– Genesis 22:7-8 ESV

- **A decidedly dark story**

- This is a difficult chapter
- It has been hotly debated over the centuries
- It has been used by some as an example of “divine child abuse”

“Everyone knows the beautiful story of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac. How this noble father led his child to the slaughter; how Isaac meekly submitted; how the farce went on till the lad was bound and laid on the altar, and how God then stopped the murder, and blessed the intending murderer for his willingness to commit the crime.” – Annie Besant, 19th-C British author, socialist, and women’s rights activist

“God ordered Abraham to make a burnt offering of his longed-for son. Abraham built an altar, put firewood upon it, and trussed Isaac up on top of the wood. His murdering knife was already in his hand when an angel dramatically intervened with the news of a last-minute change of plan: God was only joking after all, 'tempting' Abraham, and testing his faith...“A modern moralist cannot help but wonder how a child could ever recover from such a psychological trauma. By the standards of modern morality, this disgraceful story is an example of child abuse...Yet the legend is one of the great foundational myths of all three monotheistic religions.” – Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*

What kind of God would...

- ...destroy all of humanity in a flood?
- ...annihilate the inhabitants of two cities?
- ...condone the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael?
- ...order the cultic execution of Abraham’s son?

“...chapter 22 of Genesis is less about the faith-filled exploits of Abraham than it is about the faithfulness of God. As we do with so many of the stories found in the Scriptures, we tend to make this one about us. Because we’re human, we seek out the moral lessons, both good and bad, that we can learn from the human characters found in the stories the Bible contains.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

- The faithfulness of God

He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is! – Deuteronomy 32:4 NLT

*“Surely you wouldn’t do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn’t do that! **Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?**”* – Genesis 18:25 NLT

- **God tests Abraham**

nāsâ – נָסָא – to test, try, assay, put to the proof

- Who is this “test” really for?
- Is God in need of information about Abraham?
- No, this is all for Abraham’s benefit

“Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” – Genesis 15:5 ESV

*And **he believed the Lord**, and he counted it to him as righteousness.* – Genesis 15:6 ESV

- Abraham took God at His word
 - He believed the promises would be fulfilled
 - But he wasn’t sure how or when
 - He had tried Lot, Eleazar, and even Ishmael
 - Now, his hopes had been fulfilled in Isaac

*The Lord visited Sarah **as he had said**, and the Lord did to Sarah **as he had promised**. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him.* – Genesis 21:1-2 ESV

THE PROMISES PIPELINE

"All the families on earth will be blessed through you."
- GENESIS 12:3 NLT

ABRAHAM



ISAAC



"I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."
- GENESIS 17:21 ESV

- I will make of you a great nation – Gen 12:2
- I will bless you – Gen 12:2
- I will make your name great – Gen 12:2
- In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed – Gen 12:3
- I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth – Gen 13:16
- Your very own shall be your heir – Gen 15:4
- I will make you exceedingly fruitful – Gen 17:6
- I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you – Gen 17:6
- I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan – Gen 17:8

- Would he trust the God who made the promise or place his hope in the son who seemed to be the key to the promise being fulfilled?

- **Dazed and confused**

- How would this story have impacted the Israelites?
 - It was in direct violation of God's law
 - A message on another mount

You must not worship the Lord your God the way the other nations worship their gods, for they perform for their gods every detestable act that the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters as sacrifices to their gods. – Deuteronomy 12:31 NLT

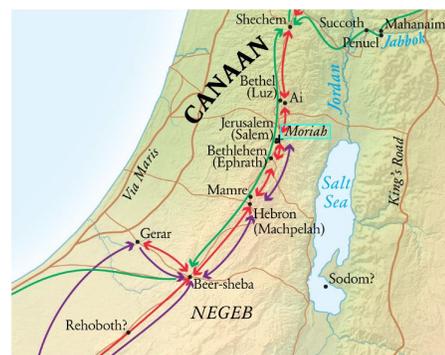
*There shall not be found among you anyone **who burns his son or his daughter as an offering...** – Deuteronomy 18:10 NLT*

- But God had not given Abraham the law
- There was no prohibition against child sacrifice
- Abraham had no reason to see this as strange

- **Wishful thinking of an expression of faith?**

- God sent Abraham to the land of Moriah
- Abraham said he and the boy would return
 - Did he really believe this?
 - Or was he simply hiding the truth from Isaac?

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac



shall your offspring be named.” He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. – Hebrews 11:17-19 ESV

- Abraham was attempting to trust God
 - Abraham believed the promises of God
 - And he believed Isaac was the key to receiving all of God’s promises
 - Got to Abraham, God was the genie and Isaac was the magic lamp
 - Isaac had become the focus of all his hope

“The test for Abraham is not primarily whether to sacrifice a beloved son, though that is no doubt involved emotionally. The real test is whether Abraham will sacrifice the one person who can perpetuate the promises of God, and particularly those promises that his posterity should thrive.” – Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*

- One step further
 - God wanted Abraham to trust Him, rather than Isaac
 - Abraham needed to know that Isaac was **expendable**
 - God was not **obligated** to work through Isaac

“Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones.” – Matthew 3:9 NLT

- Would Abraham worship **the gift or the Giver?**
- Would he **idolize Isaac or reverence God?**

- **The timeless message of the story**

- Abraham believed Isaac to be the lamb
- But God had something else in mind
 - To the Jews preparing to enter Canaan: The Passover
 - To us: The sinless Lamb of God
- The Passover
 - The annual celebration of their deliverance from Egypt

...on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household...without blemish, a male a year old...the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it... – Exodus 12:3, 5, 6-7 ESV

...I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you

are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. – Exodus 12:12-13 ESV

- The Jews were well aware that Isaac had lived
- Their very existence was proof
- They were his direct descendants through his son, Jacob
- Isaac’s “sacrifice” pictured the deaths of the lambs
- The Israelites had been spared just as Isaac had

- The Lamb of God

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! **The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” – John 1:29 NLT*

*Now as they were eating [the Passover meal], Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for the forgiveness of sins.** – Matthew 26:26-28 ESV*

*But he was pierced for our rebellion,
crushed for our sins.
He was beaten so we could be whole.
He was whipped so we could be healed.
All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
We have left God’s paths to follow our own.
Yet the Lord laid on him
the sins of us all.
He was oppressed and treated harshly,
yet he never said a word.
He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,
he did not open his mouth.
Unjustly condemned, he was led away.
No one cared that he died without descendants,
that his life was cut short in midstream.
But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people. – Isaiah 53:5-8 NLT*

• **The substitutionary death of Jesus foreshadowed**

- God provided a stand-in or proxy
- Isaac was spared from death by God

He [Jesus] himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. – 1 Peter 2:24 ESV

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit... – 1 Peter 3:18
ESV

- The sacrifice of Isaac was a foreshadow of things to come
 - God provided a substitute for Isaac
 - And God has provided a substitute for you and me
- **A means to an end**
 - Isaac was simply a **conduit**, not the **climax**
 - There was something greater to come

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

- **Discussion questions**

How does Paul's explanation Galatians 3:16 change the way you view all the promises God made to Abraham?

How could the command that Isaac be sacrificed create in Abraham a greater dependence upon and hope in God?

What gifts have you received from God that you've ended up worshiping in place of Him?
Discuss what Romans 12:1 would look like when applied to everyday life.



BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2022 – WEEK 11 HOMEWORK

WEEK 11: Genesis 23:1-26:5 – A New Chapter Begins

This lesson will wrap up the first half of our study on Genesis and set up the Spring semester. In it, we see Moses driving the narrative to a conclusion and setting up a new chapter in his history of the people of Israel. The baton is being passed from one generation to another. Sarah dies and Abraham arranges to find a bride for his son, Isaac. With Abraham's eventual death, the narrative shifts to Isaac and the covenant promise passes on to the descendants of Abraham. This lesson will end with the reiteration of God's covenant promise: "I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:4-5 ESV). And with this statement, the next chapter in the story of Israel begins.

- Read Genesis 23:1-26:5. This is a lot of material, so try to divide it up over the week. As you read, write down the key events that are covered by these chapters.
- Read pages 279-213 of Ken's Devotional™ on Genesis.
- In chapter 23, Abraham mourns the death of his wife, Sarah. Why do you think it is significant that the only piece of property Abraham ever owned in Canaan was the burial plot for his wife?

Why was it important to Abraham that he pay the full price for the land? Why was he not willing to accept the land as a gift (see vss 10-16)?

- In chapter 24, Moses begins to make a transition from Abraham to Isaac. He actually began this transition back at the end of chapter 22. Read Genesis 22: 20-24. How does Moses begin the shift to Isaac in these verses?

Why was it important that Abraham find a wife for his son, Isaac?

Why did Abraham send his servant all the way back to Haran to search for a bride for Isaac?

How do you see the sovereignty of God in this story? Write down all the examples you see of God working behind the scenes to orchestrate all that happens.

- Why do you think Moses added verses 1-6 of chapter 26? How is this important to the overall story?

Why did God have Moses recap the lineage of Ishmael?

- Read Genesis 25:19-34. Rebekah ends up suffering from barrenness just like Sarah. How does God bless her?

But how does this “blessing” end up becoming a kind of curse?

What is significant about Esau “despising” and, ultimately, selling his birthright?

- Read Genesis 26:1-5, then go back and revisit Genesis 12:10-20. Why did God prevent Isaac from going to Egypt to escape the famine?

God tells Isaac that he will inherit all the promises given to Abraham. What does God tell Isaac he must do for that to happen and who does He use as an example?