

GOD'S TEST OF ABRAHAM

CORE PASSAGE: GENESIS 22:1-14

CONTEXT

In keeping with God's covenant, Abraham's promised child finally arrived with the birth of Isaac. A few years later, God called to Abraham again; this time He commanded Abraham to take his son up a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice there to the Lord. Why would God ask Abraham to do such a thing? God put Abraham to the test to demonstrate Abraham's complete devotion to Him and, as we will see, God's merciful provision. This remained a fulfillment of God's promise and ultimately pointed to a greater fulfillment yet to come.

KEY CONCEPT

The Lord tests our faith so it may be proven by obedience.

As you read Genesis 22:1-14:

- Identify Abraham's actions that indicated he trusted God absolutely.
- Consider how the gospel gives us encouragement to respond to tests and trials with faith.



TIMELINE

God Makes a Covenant with Abraham to Bless His Family Through Sarah (Genesis 17)

**SESSION STUDY: God Tests Abraham's Obedience
with a Command to Sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22)**

Abraham and Sarah Give Birth to Isaac,
the Promised Son (Genesis 21)

Sarah Dies and Is Buried (Genesis 23)

Abraham Finds a Wife for Isaac (Genesis 24)

Daily Readings

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: Genesis 20:1-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: Genesis 21:22-34 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: Genesis 21:1-7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: Genesis 22:1-19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: Genesis 21:8-21 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 66 |



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

GENESIS 22:1-6

FAITH IN GOD IS TESTED BY GOD.

Circle Abraham's actions that demonstrated his obedient faith.

1 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he answered. **2** "Take your son," he said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." **3** So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. **4** On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. **5** Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we'll come back to you." **6** Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Abraham fully intended to obey the Lord and sacrifice Isaac, the son whom God had promised to carry the covenant forward. Abraham believed the Lord would be faithful to that covenant, so he reasoned that God would even raise his son from the dead if necessary (Hebrews 11:17-19). Abraham's faith was a resurrection faith, and we share in his covenant and faith when we believe in Jesus, God's one and only Son, crucified and raised from the dead for our salvation.

Key Concept: The Lord tests our faith so it may be proven by obedience.

Tests do two things—they confirm what we know and what we don't know. In fact, until we are tested, it's hard to know for sure what we know at all. Tests are necessary proof.

Abraham's test in Genesis 22 was the hardest of his life, though in some ways, it was not unlike the test he had already faced in Genesis 12. He again was called to go somewhere unknown—"one of the mountains I will tell you about"—just as he was in Genesis 12 when God called him to "go . . . to the land that I will show you." Likewise, he was called to make an incredible sacrifice. In Genesis 12, the sacrifice was to leave his home and all he knew. In Genesis 22, it was giving up his "only" promised son. Each was a test for radical obedience by faith in God's promises. First, Abraham trusted God with his hope for a son. Then he trusted God with the life of that son.

What are some tests of faith that you have experienced in your life?

It is difficult to find a better example of obedient faith than Abraham. He did not delay. God called, and Abraham responded immediately. God told him to take Isaac up the mountain and offer him there, and Abraham rose early in the morning

to begin the trip. With each step of faith, Abraham put his life more firmly into God's hands. He had to trust God at the very deepest core of his being. Therefore, he serves as a remarkable example of a believer's faithful response to God's Word, no matter the circumstances.

So deep was Abraham's faith that what was impossible with man, Abraham believed to be possible with God. The author of Hebrews, speaking of these events, tells us that Abraham "considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead" (Hebrews 11:19; cp. Genesis 22:5). As Abraham walked with his son those three days, he knew what God asked him to do, and he knew the kind of God he served. He had already trusted God for his son once. He could do it again. He would do it again. The test was underway.

How does the gospel help us face various trials and trust God despite our circumstances?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

✕ "The test, instead of breaking him, brings him to the summit of his lifelong walk with God."¹
—Derek Kidner (1913–2008)

PERSONAL PREPARATION

GENESIS 22:7-14

FAITH IN GOD IS PROVEN BY OBEDIENCE.

Mark off two sections by the phrase "Here I am" and summarize each section in one sentence.

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, "My father." And he replied, "Here I am, my son." Isaac said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" **8** Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Then the two of them walked on together. **9** When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. **10** Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. **11** But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" He replied, "Here I am." **12** Then he said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me." **13** Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. **14** And Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide, so today it is said, "It will be provided on the LORD's mountain."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

FAITH: Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Key Concept: The Lord tests our faith so it may be proven by obedience.

As Abraham and Isaac neared the mountain, the story slows down, and the details become very deliberate and weighted with meaning. Isaac finally spoke, and so began one of the most dramatic conversations in the Bible—the only conversation between Abraham and Isaac we have recorded.

Isaac was confused about what they were doing, so he asked his father a question. He noticed the fire and the wood, but without a sacrificial lamb, what were they going to do up on that mountaintop? Abraham's answer was not a white lie to help both parties endure the question; rather, it could have been Abraham's life's motto: "God himself will provide" (v. 8). Abraham's walk with his son was proof of the faith that resided in his heart. But there was still more to do, so they walked on.

How might you share with others the truth that "God himself will provide"?

Abraham did not delay when they arrived. He built an altar, arranged the wood, and then bound his son and placed him on the wood. The very same wood Isaac carried up the hill was now his bed as his father raised the knife over him. What must Isaac have felt inside? What must Abraham have felt?

Abraham's obedience to God's command is remarkable. What else could drive him to such a place with such an intent? Only God's command and faith in the God who gave it. But at the right time, the angel of the Lord called Abraham's name, and he responded, "Here I am." Abraham's ears were always open to hear from God.

Abraham had passed the test. His obedience proved the depth of his faith. He truly feared God. God knew this already, of course. He is omniscient. Perhaps, however, it was new information to Abraham. His faith was not theoretical. It was real and active. He believed God would provide, and God did. God always had. He always will.

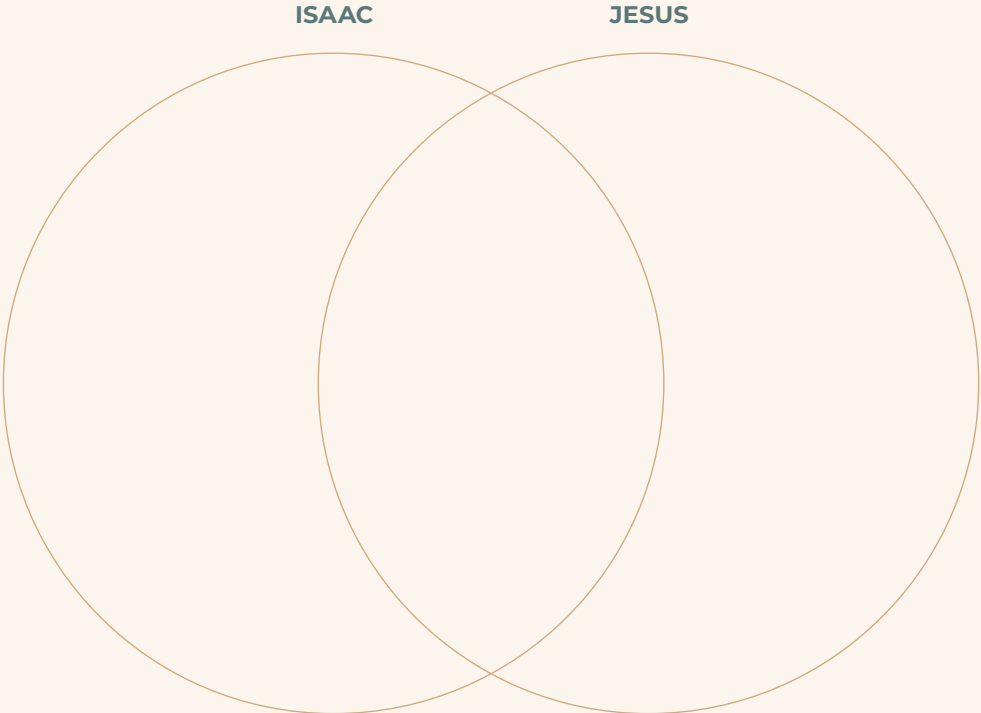
One day, near where Abraham and Isaac stood that day to offer the ram in the thicket, another Son would ascend the hill carrying the wood to which He would be bound (see 2 Chronicles 3:1). That day, the Son would not have a substitute—He was the substitute. The sacrifice would be made. God would finally and ultimately provide the sacrifice to atone for the sins of His people, and a sacrifice would never again be needed.

What parallels do you see between the events of Genesis 22 and the gospel?



THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Compare and contrast Isaac's and Jesus's sacrifices in the diagram below.



What similarity or difference between the sacrifices of Abraham's son and God's Son stands out to you most this day, and why?



Key Concept: The Lord tests our faith so it may be proven by obedience.



HEAD

Where do you feel the test of God today, and how can seeing it through the lens of the gospel help you take the next faithful step?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 66 and praise God for His awe-inspiring works. Thank God that though He tests us, He brings us through. Pray for faithfulness during your tests in honor of Jesus Christ, who passed every test for us.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

How can you focus on the gospel today and receive the love of God for you?



HANDS

What has God called you to do, and how will you take steps toward obedience in faith today?



OUR FATHER ABRAHAM

By Greg Kilgore

Kids ministries at churches love to use songs to teach truth. One song from the last 40 or so years is “Father Abraham,” which includes the lyric “Father Abraham had many sons, and many sons had Father Abraham.” Doesn’t it seem odd that for the most part, Gentiles—non-Jews—are singing about being sons of Abraham, the father of the Jews? Yet this makes perfect sense in light of Abram’s call in Genesis 12 and the covenant God makes with Abram in Genesis 15 and 17. That song may have been much more theologically accurate than many realize.

THE CALL

We first meet Abram at the end of Genesis 11, traveling with his father. But at the beginning of chapter 12, God appears to Abram and says:

Go from your land, your relatives, and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you. (vv. 1-3)

After receiving God’s call and promise of blessing, Abram acts obediently. Faithful obedience follows faithful trust in God’s Word. This does not mean that a believer’s obedience to God is always perfect. As we know from the rest of Abram’s life, he was far from perfect. However, genuine faith does lead to genuine obedience. Abram obeyed God because he believed His words were true. Similarly, Christians should seek to be obedient to God’s commands because of what He has done for us in Christ. Our obedience does not earn us God’s favor; rather, our obedience flows out of gratitude for receiving God’s favor.

God was calling Abram to forsake all and follow Him. In one sense, He was calling Abram to abandon his identity. Everything about who he was in his past was now going to have to be left behind. God’s call to Abram was to leave behind almost everything that was dear to him. Not many people can really understand what this would have been like to leave all. We live in such a mobile society today that we cannot really fathom what this would have been like. We can move across the country but still be connected with our families through the press of a button. We could go all the way to the other side of the

world and still be able to talk daily with our families. If we were present to see Abram leaving, it would have been shocking. If we saw Abram leaving behind his homeland and family, we would have thought him crazy.

THE FAITH

The call of Abram is one of the most significant sections in the book of Genesis because he was called to leave his homeland and go where God was calling him. But there was a problem—God did not tell Abram where He was calling him to. Abram would leave behind nearly all his family to go somewhere God would lead him. He would leave behind nearly all that was familiar to him for a place unfamiliar.

Abram trusted God's word and acted obediently. What led Abram to leave behind the familiar for the unfamiliar? The call of God upon his life and the faith he had in the one true God who called him. As the author of Hebrews writes: "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8). Similarly, we can obey the Lord and His commands because we know from God's Word and God's record that He will be faithful to keep His promises.

The call of God is costly. What does God's call upon your life cost you? For some it will mean leaving behind a life of ease and comfort to faithfully follow God's call to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. For others this will mean living as a faithful witness where God has placed you currently. God's call upon our lives is costly because it means

we are not to live a life of self-fulfillment but a life of self-denial. But however costly God's call upon your life may be, it is eternally worth it!

THE PROMISE

In Galatians 3, the apostle Paul wrote:

You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham's sons. Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed through you." Consequently, those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith. (vv. 7-9)

Singing about being sons of Abraham is not odd when you have a right understanding of what God is saying in His Word. Through faith in Jesus, the promised Son of Abraham to bless all the peoples on earth, through faith in Him, we are fit to be called sons of Abraham and heirs with Christ of the promises of God.

Greg Kilgore is the associational missions strategist for the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association and a member of Woodward Park Baptist Church in Fresno, California. He and his wife, Megan, have three children: Owen, Camille, and Judson Titus. Greg is a PhD student at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he also teaches as an adjunct professor.