



Genesis – 22:1 -22:24
Abraham Proceeds to Mt Moriah to Sacrifice His Only Son!
(Lesson #31)

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Vs 1-3 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.

Vs 1 - The “these things” are the **birth of Isaac**, the **weening of Isaac**, the **expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael**, and the **covenant with Abimelech**.

Most scholars believe this is **years after the events of chapter 21**, when those happened Abraham was a minimum of 103 years old.

As we hit the text today, most scholars believe that Isaac is around 15-20, this means Abraham is 115-120.

There are some scholars who believe that Isaac is in **his early 30s**. In passing, if this is true, then Isaac was roughly the **same age** when this event happened, that Jesus was when he was offered up!

In chapter 23, we will see that he Isaac is 37, so in response to those who believe he is a man. I do not disagree, I would only say, the text refers to him as a boy or young man in verse 5.

Again, the next date stamp we have after this is Abraham is 137 and Isaac will be 37. That is really all we know for sure.

Vs 1- God tested Abraham. The Hebrew word is נָסָה (**nacah**), it means to **prove**, to **test**, to **try**.

This is the very **first use** of this **Hebrew word** in the Bible. Thus, the first recorded saint whose faith would be tested by Yahweh is our spiritual father, Abraham.

Now you might argue, God has been testing his faith all along and of course I would agree. But this is the first time we are **specifically told** that God נָסָה (**nacah**) tested his faith!

APPLICATION:

“2 ¶ Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (Jas 1:2-4 ESV)

God does not test our faith to **see if it exists**, He tests our faith that we might see its maturity and character and that the trial might mature our faith.

APPLICATION: Being put through a spiritual trial is not the same thing as being tempted to sin. James tells us clearly:

“13 ¶ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.” (Jas 1:13-14 ESV)

Here is the setup of the test of Abraham’s faith. God in some way, came and spoke to Abraham.

Abraham responded and said "**Here I am.**"

Then **God said to Abraham:** Take you son. **Your only son.** This word can mean only one, but it can also mean **unique.**

APPLICATION:

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (Joh 1:14 NKJV)

The English phrase "only begotten" is the Greek word **μονογενής (monogenes)**, now as I say that word, you can start to detect the two words that make up this compound word.

Mono – single, one, only (monarch, monogamy, monopoly).

Genace – biology, species, or kind.

Jesus is the **unique, one of a kind**, totally and unique Son of God, the God-man. Isaac is not the **God-man**, but he too was unique, he is the **son of promise.**

The son whom you love. The Hebrew word translated love is **אהב ('ahab)**. This is word will be used over **200 times** in the Hebrew Bible.

This is the **VERY first time** this word (**for love**) is used!

Vs 2b - Take Isaac and offer him up. Likely all of us know how this plays out. But for a second, **pretend you do not.**

The test: 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."

Put yourself in Abraham's shoes: What is going through your head?

Abraham and Sarah have waited their whole life for Isaac. Here is the test! Notice **God's instructions** to Abraham:

Take your son, notice **your only son** Isaac. The **son whom you love!** **Ishamel** is long gone from the picture. Ishmael was not God's plan.

As you think about Moriah and a mountain in Moriah, I would be remiss if I did not remind us:

*"Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on **Mount Moriah**, where the LORD had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." (2Ch 3:1 ESV)*

Then in Moriah on a mountain I will show you. There offer your only son, as a Burnt Offering on one of the mountains that I will show you!

This is only the second use of this Hebrew word translated "**burnt offering**". It will be used almost 300 times in the Hebrew Bible, but the vast majority of those are after the institution of the **Mosaic covenant.**

Burnt offerings become a staple of Judaism. The burnt offering will not be mentioned again until Exodus 10.

Before moving along, let me remind you of the first place we saw the burnt offering:

"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar." (Ge 8:20 ESV)

Vs 3 – Abraham rose early in the morning. What does this tell you about Abraham’s faith? He saddled his donkey, and he grabbed two young servants to assist.

He grabbed his son, **his only son**, the son of the promise, the son who the nation of Israel was to come from, his son who the Messiah was to come from.

He cut wood for the offering, leaving nothing to chance, he worked to collect all that he would need to **“offer his son, his only son, as a burnt offering.”**

He saddled his **donkey**, and they headed off, to the place in the land of Moriah that God would show him.

What did he tell Sarah? We have no idea.

As you seek to put yourself into Abraham’s sandals, survey what is going on inside you?

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?"

Vs 4 - Then, after three days of traveling, Abraham sees the place. We do not know how God conveyed this is the place. But he knew he was there.

I cannot imagine what is going through Abraham’s heart.

Abraham traveled to what would become known as Jerusalem.

Vs 5 - Abraham, looked at the two servant boys and said stay here with the donkey. Then he said: ***I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.***

Issac is likely and older teenager and even possibly in his 30s!

But, how in the world could Abraham say, **I and the boy will be back?**

The writer of Hebrews provides some **amazing insight** that is very helpful for us to understand what is **going on in Abraham’s mind**:

“17 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, 18 of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.” (Heb 11:17-19 ESV)

Notice, before we leave this verse. **We are going to worship.**

Vs 6 - Abraham grabbed the wood, and **loaded it** on his **son’s back**.

You should not be being picturing a child. You should be picturing an older teenager or even a young man, carrying wood up this mount.

Isaac will carry the wood up the mountain. Abraham took fire and a knife.

So, Abraham and Isaac set out to go up the mountain, together.

Vs 7 - As they are proceeding up the mountain, Isaac asks Abraham: my father, I see the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb, where is the animal that we will offer as a burnt offering to Yahweh.

Notice the son, in the midst of this has a question... Tuck that away somewhere!

Vs 8 - *Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.*

Vs 8 - Abraham looked at this son and said: *God will provide for himself the lamb...*

According to **Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum**, an imminent Hebrew scholar: The Hebrew here can be translated one of two ways:

- **The first option:** God will provide for Himself...
- **The second option:** God will provide Himself...

In either case it is divine provision, and in the end, both cases will prove to be true!

They continued up the mountain together.

Vs 9-10 - *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.*

Vs 9 - So we can imagine they are likely near the top of the mountain, near the top of Mt Moriah and there Abraham builds an altar. Abraham had already built a couple of altars in Canaan, here is another on this mountain. In approximately 1000 years a temple will be built on this ridge system.

He lays the wood in order. Then Abraham binds his son (Isaac). It does not appear Isaac fought. Then Abraham lays him or has him lay on top of the altar on top of the wood.

Can you imagine what is going through **Abraham's mind**?

Can you imagine what is going through Isaac's mind? But notice, Isaac went along with what was happening, we have no indication that the **only son fought**, but instead **submitted** to what his father was doing...

Vs 10 – Then, Abraham lifted the knife fully intending to slay his son!

Vs 11-12 - *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."*

Vs 11 – But, our minds were begging for that conjunction. **But...**

Notice the **angel of the LORD**, the **angel of Yahweh**, likely **Yahweh himself**, called from heaven.

The angel of Yahweh spoke and 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."***

What **God already knew** (because he is God and he is omniscient) is now known by Abraham **experiencedly!**

This was not a test for God, this was a test for Abraham!

Was Abraham saved because he offered his son? NO, Abraham was **justified** by **faith** many years prior:
"5 And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." (Ge 15:5-6 ESV)

***** But real faith activates works, real justifying faith activates obedience. *****

There are decades, between Genesis 15 and Genesis 22. Abraham has been a believer for YEARS!

Also, God was not testing Himself, God was testing the quality and the character of Abraham's faith.

APPLICATION:

"21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" — and he was called a friend of God." (Jas 2:21-23 ESV)

The same is true for you and I, **justification activates faith and obedience in our lives.**

We are able to trust God even in the emergency. When we see **NO WAY OUT!** Now we are not talking about **perfect faith and obedience.** Abraham, did not **possess perfect faith and obedience.**

But we are talking about being new creatures in Christ, and the Spirit of God, changing us to be more and more like our Savior.

Theology Break - God's omniscience:

Rich Turner quips chapter 1 verse 1 – Has it every occurred to you that nothing has ever occurred to God?

"1 « To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. » O LORD, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether." (Ps 139:1-4 ESV)

"And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (Heb 4:13 ESV)

"Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure." (Ps 147:5 ESV)

Vs 13-14 - 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."

Vs 13 - Then as the knife, likely slumps back to his side, he lifts his eyes from Isaac. Behold, behind him, a ram caught in the thicket, caught by his horns.

Abraham takes his son off the alter, cuts the ropes that bound him.

In his place he **offers this ram**, that as it turns out, **God provided**. God has **provided a substitute for Isaac**.

Here in this story, that really happened, and Abraham likely had no idea, but this is the clearest picture of the **substitutionary death of the Messiah in the entire Bible!**

Jesus is the ram; Jesus is the innocent lamb that was offered up in the place of you and I!

We deserved the dagger of God's justice, we deserved to be punished for our sins, we deserved to spend eternity under the wrath of God.

But behold... Not the ram, but the lamb of God, Jesus who takes away the sins of the world.

God loved the Son, the second person of the Godhead yet:

"16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (Joh 3:16-17 ESV)

And the son, as he faced Calvary, like Isaac faced the knife of his father, the son asked:

"37 And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." 39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Mt 26:37-39 ESV)

The difference, in the type, in the symbol, in the shadow, God stepped in. **In the actual, the real event**, God the Father **plunged the knife** into the chest of His beloved Son and he did so for each of us.

APPLICATION: God has provided a substitute for you and me! Have we accepted the sacrifice of Jesus, by faith? That is the only outstanding question.

Vs 14 - Echoing **Abraham's earlier comment to Isaac**, Abraham no doubt amazed at what God has done here. Names the place in honor of what God has done.

The name is **יהוה יראה (Y'hovah) (yireh)**. **The Lord provides!!!**

For it is said, on the day that Moses recorded this: **"on the Mountain, Yahweh, will provide!"**

Wait... Shouldn't it be **"on the mountain Yahweh provided?"**

The imperfect tense expresses an action, process or condition which is **incomplete**. For a single action, it adds the color of suggesting the "process" is **preliminary** and not yet **completed**.

This is yet another name of God. Remember I provided that list of ten of them when we first started our study through Genesis.

Also, keep in mind, it was on this **very mountain** ridge system that Jesus was crucified for the sins of the world and it is likely that Abraham spoke prophetically when he said: **"on the mountain, Yahweh will provide!"**

For God will provide for Himself an offering and equally God will provide Himself as an offering.

I hope this blows you away. It is all being woven together 2000 years before the Messiah would come!

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."

Vs 15 - Once again, this angel of Yahweh calls from heaven, a second time, to Abraham.

Vs 16-18 - As you consider these verses, I would ask you to consider them as a process. A process that involved God calling Abraham out of Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2), a process that involved God calling Abraham again out of Haran (Gen 12:1) that included great and precious promises:

"1 ¶ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 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. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Ge 12:1-3 ESV)

A process that reached a **climax** in chapter 15:

"5 And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." (Ge 15:5-6 ESV)

A process where God continued to show Abraham more and more, and Abraham grew but sometimes stumbled, in his faith. A process very similar to our **walk of faith**.

With each passing page a little more light is shed on the promises and in particular the promises related to the coming Messiah.

Vs 17 - The same journey of faith that Abraham is on, so is each one of us who have been born again. Hopefully our obedience has moved beyond what it was when we first believed, and hopefully it is advancing towards what Abraham's looked like in this chapter.

Hopefully as we continue to walk with God, He continues to give us the assurance of our inheritance.

But these blessing announced by God are not new, everyone of them has already been stated, these are simply restatements reiterations of promises already made and Abraham is growing as the promises are getting brighter!

Vs 18 - Before we leave these verses, see it afresh: ***"and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed!"***

IMPORTANT POINT: Seeing the progression is one of the major values of verse-by-verse teaching!

Vs 19 - ***So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.***

Vs 19 - He returns with his young men, and then it appears he makes the decision to move to Beersheba if not already living in Beersheba.

Vs 20-24 - Now after these things it was told to Abraham, "Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21 Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23 (Bethuel fathered Rebekah.) These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 Moreover, his concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Vs 20 – After these things, Abraham learns that Milcah has borne children to his brother Nahor.

Milcah is Nahor (Abraham's brother's wife). If you remember:

"27 ¶ Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. 28 Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah." (Ge 11:27-29 ESV)

So Haran died in Ur and his dad Terah would die later. Haran had a son – Lot, who was in a sense adopted by Abraham.

Haran also had two girls – **Milcah and Iscah**. **Nahor** (brother of Abraham and Haran) married his brother (Haran's) daughter **Milcah**.

Here Abraham gets word that Milcah had born children to **Nahor**. It is likely that they are so far away they had heard very little of what was going on in Haran.

But here they get word that God has blessed the union of Nahor and Milcah with children.

Vs 21 - Here we find the children born to Nahor and Milcah: Uz, Buz, Kemuel, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel. Then the additional information that Bethuel fathered Rebekah.

This piece of information that Bethuel fathered Rebekah means nothing right now, but Rebekah, as you will soon see will become Isaac's (the son of the promise) wife.

Vs 24 – Moreover, Nahor had a concubine (Reumah) who would bare to Nahor Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Here further we have recorded that Nahor also had a concubine (Reumah) would bare to Nahor these three sons, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Next week we see that Sarah will die at the age of 127 years old. Isaac will be 37 years old when she passes away. Abraham will be 137 years old when she passes away. The stage is set for the focus to shift from Abraham and Sarah to the next patriarch.
