

# Abraham's Greatest Test

## Lesson for Sunday, November 5, 2023

TEXT: Genesis 22

### WHY THIS LESSON:

- ⇒ We are actually in the middle of a study through the book of James. In the text we are currently studying, James uses Abraham as an example of someone who proved their faith by their works.
- ⇒ In Romans, Paul also uses Abraham to make the point that we are only saved by faith – without any works.
- ⇒ So, to better understand James 2, we need to understand Genesis 22.

### INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ What is the hardest thing you have ever endured? Why was it so difficult? *Allow for discussion...*
  - What did you learn through your experience? Point out that Christianity allows purpose in the midst of trials.
- ⇒ Today we will see that God gave Abraham a very strange command that would be a difficult test for any person to endure, and we will see how Abraham responded and be reminded that God can always be trusted.

### CONTEXT:

- ⇒ God had fulfilled His promise and given Abraham and Sarah a son, who they named Isaac. By the time of chapter 22, Isaac was most likely 20-25 years old, and some scholars even believe he was in his early 30's. The word "lad" that is used here is translated as "young man" in several other passages.
- ⇒ Remember God's promise to Abraham – that he would make of him a great nation. Isaac was the beginning of that promise. Then God asks Abraham to do the unthinkable.

### OUTLINE:

1. God's strange **command** (vs. 1-2)
  - a. What does verse 1 mean when it says that God "tempted" Abraham?
    - i. Does God tempt any person to do evil? Give Bible proof.
    - ii. Take them back to James 1:13-15.
    - iii. The word literally means to put to the test or to prove.
    - iv. God was testing Abraham and his commitment. This was an opportunity for Abraham to prove his faith.
  - b. What did God ask Abraham to do in verse 2? Why would this seem so strange to Abraham? Why does this sound so strange to us? *Discuss...*
    - i. God had always condemned offering human sacrifices. God's request of Abraham seemed to contradict God's previous commands.
    - ii. Don't forget that Isaac was Abraham's only heir! How would his family be "as innumerable as the stars" if his son was to die?
  - c. Notice the location God sent Abraham to – a mountain in the land of Moriah.
    - i. History tells us this is the same place on the eastern edge of Jerusalem on which Solomon would one day build the Temple.

- ii. Some believe that it is the exact mountain where Jesus would one day be crucified.
- 2. Abraham's radical **obedience** (vs. 3-8)
  - a. Notice Abraham's instant obedience in verse 3. He rose up early and headed out with Isaac.
  - b. Notice how Abraham also took with him the items he would need to carry out his assignment (wood).
  - c. Discuss:
    - i. It doesn't seem Abraham had any hesitation.
    - ii. What degree of faith did it take for Abraham to respond like this?
    - iii. Did God deserve this type of faith? Why or why not?
  - d. Verse 4 tells us that it took three days arrive at their location. What do you think they talked about? What do you think was happening in Abraham's head as they traveled?
  - e. In verse 7 Isaac begins to notice that something is missing. He asks his father, "Where is the lamb?" He had seen sacrifices and knew the key element was missing – or so he thought.
  - f. Abraham answers in verse 8, "God will provide Himself a lamb."
    - i. Do you see it? Do you see Abraham's faith?
    - ii. How could Abraham say that? He trusted in the character of God. He trusted that God would do what He said He would do.
    - iii. God had never given Abraham a reason not to trust Him, so he could trust God even when it didn't seem right.
  - g. There are other clues to the faith that Abraham had that day.
    - i. In verse 5, Abraham told the men that they would go to worship and would then "come again unto you."
    - ii. The writer of Hebrews makes this point in 11:17-19. Abraham believed that even if he had to kill Isaac, God would raise Isaac to life again.
- 3. God's perfect **provision** (vs. 9–14)
  - a. It was now the moment of truth. Try to picture the scene in your mind.
    - i. Isaac (the son) allows Abraham (the father) to bind him (9).
    - ii. Abraham brings the knife up to slay his son – total obedience (10).
  - b. In verse 11, the angel of the Lord (we believe an appearance of Christ) stops Abraham in the act!
  - c. Abraham had passed the test (12)! They looked up and God had provided a ram for the burnt offering (13).
  - d. Abraham calls the place Jehovah-Jireh – the Lord will **provide**.

#### APPLICATION/CONCLUSION:

- ⇒ Do you see the Gospel?
  - Isaac carrying the wood as Jesus carried His cross...
  - Isaac obeying His Father and placing himself on the altar like Jesus obeyed His Heavenly Father and willingly gave His life a sacrifice...
  - God providing a ram for Abraham as He provided us the Lamb 2000 years later.
- ⇒ Was the test really for God or for Abraham? What impact do you think this made on Abraham moving forward from that day?
- ⇒ Believing God is the most important thing we can do. What situation is there in your life where you simply need to believe God and trust what He has said?