



Lesson 14

Abraham and Isaac

A Test of Faith

After Ishmael and Hagar had left, God tested the faith of Abraham.

“After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." 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.”
Genesis 22:1-2

We can imagine how Abraham felt. For many years God had promised him a special son through whom the Lord’s promises would be fulfilled. It seemed that this would never happen and then, miraculously, he and Sarah had a baby, Isaac. Abraham had sent Ishmael, his other son, away as God told him to do, now God says “*Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love*”. This must have been very hard for this aged man who is more than 100 years old.

In the New Testament we find similar words spoken by God to describe His son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is called God’s only son (John 1:14) and the one whom He loves (Luke 3:22). As we understand Abraham’s pain and distress at being asked to sacrifice Isaac, we see what a great price God paid when He gave His beloved and only son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

Abraham’s obedience was total. He went early the next morning and travelled directly to Moriah. We read:

“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. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.”
Genesis 22:9-10

It is not just Abraham’s faith and obedience we see here. Isaac was a young man and must have been much stronger than his aged father. At any time he could have easily stopped Abraham yet he didn’t. They went together to worship God (this is the first time the word ‘worship’ is used in the Bible). Isaac carried the wood for the fire and he did not resist his father when Abraham bound him and laid him on the wood. He was a willing sacrifice, father and son were united in obeying God.

Why were they both so willing to do what God asked? We find the answer in the Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament.

“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.”
Hebrews 11:17-19

God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants forever. God had also said that this promise would be fulfilled through Isaac as Abraham’s special son. Therefore, if Isaac was killed as a sacrifice, Abraham knew that God would resurrect him from the dead because God **always** keeps His promise.

This is one of the great lessons of the Bible. We saw in Lesson 7 that ‘*Abraham believed God and He counted it to him for righteousness*’. Now we see that this faith of Abraham was so strong that he was prepared to trust in God in every way, even when asked to sacrifice his only son.

At the last moment God stopped him and provided him with an animal as a sacrifice instead of Isaac.

“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. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide;”
Genesis 22:13-14



Because of Abraham’s faith and obedience God then made His seventh and last promise to Abraham.

<p>PROMISE 7</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abraham would be blessed by God. (We saw in Lesson 1 that this means to be chosen by God for a special purpose). 2. He would have many descendants. They are described as <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Being like the sand by the sea b. Being like the stars in the sky 3. He would have one special descendant who would overcome all his enemies. 4. Through this special descendant God’s blessing would be available to people from every nation in the world.

We know from the letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians that this special descendant is the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ.”
Galatians 3:16

There are many similarities between this testing of Abraham and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, Here are some of them.

Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22)	God and Jesus
“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,” (verse 2)	God said of Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17)
“Go into the land of Moriah” (part of Jerusalem) (verse 2)	Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem.
“Offer him there as a burnt offering” (verse 2)	“Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:2)
“Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son” (verse 6)	“And he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him” (John 19:17-18)
“God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” (verse 8)	“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)

“In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”

These are the last recorded words of God to Abraham. It is over 50 years since God first spoke to him and called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees. The Bible tells us that ‘he was but one (person)’ when God did this (Isaiah 51:2). Now, because of his faith and obedience, in these final words to him God says that the whole earth will be blessed through him.

He will have a special offspring who will be the Lord Jesus Christ. By dying on the cross Jesus will overcome the power of the grave, he will win the battle against sin and make it possible for people to be reconciled to God. It is people who share Abraham’s faith in God’s promises that will be invited to share the blessing with him and be part of God’s kingdom as the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 3.

“So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith...(v9)
so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe...(v22)
And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.” (v29)

