

## GENESIS 22      ABRAHAM OFFERS ISAAC

**1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”**

**“Here I am,” he replied.**

This important section of scripture opens with “Some time later”. Abraham had lived a life walking in faith. After the treaty with Abimelek, Abraham settled in the land of the Philistines in relative safety. Not only did the Philistines let him live in peace, they no longer attempted to take over his wells of water. Isaac was growing up into a young man and learning the family business, which was raising and selling livestock. Abraham was about to be tested. Notice, the word used is tested and not tempted. There is a difference. Tempted is when a man is faced with desire or lust and must fight his flesh to overcome the desire or lust. Tested is when a man finds out what he is truly capable of. God will test men, but the bible says God will not tempt men. James 1: 12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. 13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Months back I was watching a program that talked about the wing structure on some large, heavy aircraft. I looked up the maximum take off weight for a Boing 747 aircraft. It was reported to be over 900,000 pounds. That’s almost a million pounds, being lifted-up in the air and staying there for hours. Then it comes back to the earth and lands on the ground, without being flattened by all that weight. I thought, what keeps the wings from folding up, when lifting-up all that weight.

I looked up how the wings were tested. The testing simulated not only the aircraft’s ability to lift almost a million pounds of weight but multiplied the ability to handle much more force than just the maximum takeoff weight. The engineers would determine the maximum force of a fully loaded plain, dropping from the sky then powering up to climb again. That would give me the full maximum weight, plus the added gravity force of overcoming the downward movement to move the aircraft back up in the air again. This greatly increased the amount of

weight resistance placed on the wings to much greater than the million pounds. When testing the wing strength, the engineers apply the maximum weight stress placed on the wing then add the force to overcome going down and then pulling up again they add about another 50%. This is a force much greater than the aircraft should ever reach. If you ask the engineer if he was checking to see what it would take to make the wings fall off he would tell you, no. He was testing the wing to be sure it would never fail to carry its maximum recommended weight safely. The engineer had faith the wing would not collapse or fall off. The test was to convince everyone else the wing was safe, even under the most extreme conditions.

Just like the aircraft wing, Abraham is about to be tested.

**2 Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”**

This is Abraham’s test. God tells Abraham to offer his only son, the son of God’s promise as a sacrifice. We don’t have a list of laws and sacrifices known to Abraham. This all occurred many centuries before the law of Moses. What is known is Abraham had knowledge of a burnt offering. Abraham was familiar with God’s law of substitutionary death. From the time of Adam, God taught man that there had to be a shedding of blood, to pay for sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, God sacrificed an animal and shed its blood, to cover Adam and Eve with the animal’s skin. Noah offered a sacrifice after the great flood. Abraham knew there was a penalty for sin and that blood had to be shed. The burnt offering was a picture of the gospel of Christ. Abraham had waited a hundred years for this son of God’s promise, to come to him. Abraham must decide; do I listen to God or do I plead for God to find another way.

**3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.**

We see Abraham’s faith at work. Abraham doesn’t attempt to make a deal with God or ask why. Abraham doesn’t even try to wait out God’s command, to spend

some quality time with Isaac. Abraham's faith is such when God gives him a command he immediately obeys. This is the type of faith Abraham has. Abraham gets up, early in the morning, and loads his donkey for the trip. He cuts enough wood for the fire of a burnt offering. This isn't a small camp fire, it is enough wood for a large fire. Abraham had offered a burnt offering before, he knew what was needed. Every time he swung the ax, at the wood, was a moment of faith. Each swing was an action of faith going toward his obeying God. He is not just chopping wood, he is working by faith to fulfill God's command.

#### **4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.**

For three days Abraham walked toward the place of sacrifice. I'm sure his thoughts were on his son. For three days, he had thought of his son's death and how he was going to do it. Every time Abraham looked at Isaac, he felt the pain of knowing what he was going to put his son through. If you were to ask him, why are you doing this, he would say, because my God commanded it. If you were to ask him if it made any sense, he would say no. It doesn't make any sense. His God had never required a human sacrifice. His God had always required the substitutional death of an animal. It didn't make any sense at all, but he was going to obey his God. If God commanded it, there was a reason for it and he would put all his faith and trust in God, as he had done for many years. Each step Abraham took, toward his destination, was a step of faith. Abraham continued to walk by faith until he came to the place God had sent him. On the third day, Abraham looks up and sees the place where he is to offer his son, Isaac.

#### **5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."**

Abraham is not sure what to expect. He knows God told him to offer his only son Isaac as a sacrifice, but Abraham knows God will not break a promise. God had told him, through Isaac, he would make his descendants as great as the stars of the sky. He knew God had promised through Isaac there would be a great nation. He knew that through Isaac all the world would be blessed. Abraham had every intention of thrusting his blade into the body of Isaac. He intended to set the wood on fire and offer the life of Isaac to God. He would let the body of his son burn until the fire had consumed it. After this, he knew, he and Isaac would return to the two servants and then return home. He didn't know how it would happen,

but he believed God would make it happen. This was the kind of faith Abraham had.

The Bible says, Hebrews 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

**6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,**

Abraham placed the wood for the offering on the back of his son. There would be a day in the future when God would have the wooden cross of Calvary placed on the back of his Son, his only begotten Son, as he walked to the place he would be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

**7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”**

**“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.**

**“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”**

It appears even Isaac was familiar with the burnt offering. He and his father have offered a burnt offering in worship to God before. Isaac was aware of the substitutional shedding of blood for sin. Abraham had taught him how to worship God.

**8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.**

**9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.**

When I was young I use to think Isaac was a young boy and Abraham just scooped him up and bound him with some type of rope. Isaac was a young adult. He probably was in his twenties. A young man in good shape. He probably could have

run away or resisted, if he wanted to. I believe when Abraham explained to his son what was happening that Isaac went along and agreed to be offered. When Jesus was offered on the cross of Calvary, Jesus knew what was about to happen. Jesus didn't fear the sting of death but was concerned of taking on the penalty for the sins of the world. He was going to be punished by God for the sin of all mankind. Without his sacrifice, no man could be saved. Jesus died willingly on the cross of Calvary. I believe Isaac was willing to fulfill his father's command. Why was Isaac bound? Even though he believed his father Abraham, he was only a man. Isaac was not the son of God, he was the son of Abraham. Isaac could have become full of fear, once laid on the altar. Isaac could have changed his mind, at the last moment, so he was bound. Isaac was young and didn't have the strong faith of Abraham.

Jesus went to altar of the cross willingly. He knew the pain and suffering He would endure but accepted it. If Jesus didn't want to die on that cross, all mankind couldn't have secured him on it. He could have called out and ten thousand angels would have responded to his command. Jesus went to the cross, because he loved us. He was the lamb of God that took away the sins of an evil world. He was the true substitutional death, who died on the cross of Calvary and took on the sins of Abraham, Isaac and you and me.

**10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.**

Every step that Abraham had taken, up to this point was a walk of faith, but it wasn't enough. It all came down to the single moment of time and one single act. Would Abraham obey God's command? Abraham lifted the knife and prepared to plunge it into his son Isaac. He didn't know how God was going to restore Isaac to him, but he knew he would be restored to carry on the promises from God. Abraham prepared to plunge the knife into the heart of his son.

**11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"**

**"Here I am," he replied.**

**12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."**

Do you think God didn't know what Abraham would do? God saw Abraham's heart. God knew what was in Abraham's heart and knew Abraham believed on God with all his heart. Now Abraham also knew what was in his own heart. Abraham didn't willingly offer his son Isaac to achieve saving faith, he did it because he was full of saving faith. Now with this historical story being placed in the Bible, we also can see what can come from saving faith. Abraham didn't hesitate to offer Isaac, because he knew, believed and cherished the promises of God and knew God would fulfill all his promises.

Some will say, they don't know if they have this type of faith. This isn't saving faith, this is the place saving faith will lead a Christian. This is not the faith of a new believer, this is mature faith achieved after a long journey with God. God made a promise to Abraham, back in his home land of UR of the Chaldeas. He told Abraham to get up and leave his home and his family and God would greatly bless him. Abraham believed God and that faith was counted as righteousness. That was saving faith. Now after walking for years with God, Abraham has grown into a great mature faith. He didn't get there overnight. He had been walking with God since he was seventy-five years old. Now he was over one hundred and twenty years old.

**13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."**

God provided the sacrifice this time, in the substitution death of a ram. God is going to provide the true sacrifice for Abraham, Isaac and the rest of the world, in the death of God's only begotten Son, Jesus. God spared Abraham's son, but God did not spare His only begotten Son.

**15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."**

The angel of the Lord is the one who will come to the Earth in the form of a baby. He will grow to be a man and will die for the sins of all men. When he comes, he will be known as Jesus. He was born to die for you and me. We each are sinners before God and God can't just overlook our sins and allow us to enter his perfect Heaven. Before we can enter God's perfect kingdom, we must be cleansed of all our sins. The only way to do this is to accept Jesus death on the cross for our sin. He's already made the payment in full, but it won't do you any good, unless you by faith accept it. Only by his death and shed blood can your sin be forgiven.

**19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.**

Abraham, his servants and his son Isaac return home. They return home to Beersheba. Beersheba means place of oath. This is the home where Abraham rested after making the treaty with Abimelek and settling the ownership of the water well with the seven ewe lambs to Abimelek. This is home.

**20 Some time later Abraham was told, "Milkah is also a mother; she has borne sons to your brother Nahor: 21 Uz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel (the father of Aram), 22 Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel." 23 Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milkah bore these eight sons to Abraham's brother Nahor. 24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also had sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maakah.**

I don't always agree with the chapter and verse break downs. The original scripture didn't have the breakdowns of chapter and verse. These came many centuries later by man. They help in making it easier to study, but sometime their locations don't make a lot of sense. Where we have verse 20 I think should have been verse 1 of chapter 23.

Isaac was to be the heir of God's promises to Abraham. God made the promises to Abraham to be brought forth, by Abraham's wife Sarah. Abraham will now make sure that Isaac also, has the proper wife. She will come from the same land that Abraham and Sarah came from. Abraham will not take a wife from the Philistines or the land of Canaan for Isaac. He will send to his home land to the family of his brother Nahor and Nahor's wife Milkah. Nahor had another woman, a concubine Reumah. Abraham was going to get Isaac a wife, through the union of Nahor and Milkah, not through a concubine. Milkah bore eight sons, the

youngest was Bethuel. Bethuel was the father of Rebekah. Now the stage is set for the next important historical event, Isaac gets a wife.