

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

10-16-19

Genesis 22

Abraham Tested - Verses 1-5

¹Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ²Then 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." ³Early 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. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵He 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."

22:1 God tested Abraham, not to trip him and watch him fall, but to deepen his capacity to obey God and thus to develop his character. Just as fire refines ore to extract precious metals, God refines us through difficult circumstances. When we are tested, we can complain, or we can try to see how God is stretching us to develop our character.

22:3 That morning Abraham began one of the greatest acts of obedience in recorded history. He traveled 50 miles to Mount Moriah near the site of Jerusalem. Over the years he had learned many tough lessons about the importance of obeying God. This time his obedience was prompt and complete. Obeying God is often a struggle because it may mean giving up something we truly want. We should not expect our obedience to God to be easy or to come naturally.

Abraham Tested - Verses 6-14

⁶Abraham 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, ⁷Isaac 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?" ⁸Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. ⁹When 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. ¹⁰Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But 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." ¹³Abraham 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. ¹⁴So 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."

22:6 We don't know how Abraham carried the fire. Perhaps he carried live coals or a flint to start a fire.

22:7-8 Why did God ask Abraham to perform human sacrifice? Pagan nations practiced human sacrifice, but God condemned this as a terrible sin (Leviticus 20:1-5). God did not want Isaac to die, but he wanted Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in his heart so it would be clear that Abraham loved God more than he loved his promised and long-awaited son. God was testing Abraham. The purpose of testing is to strengthen our character and deepen our commitment to God and his perfect timing. Through this difficult experience, Abraham strengthened his commitment to obey God. He also learned about God's ability to provide.

22:12 It is difficult to let go of what we deeply love. What could be more proper than to love your only child? Yet when we do give to God what he asks, he returns to us far more than we could dream. The spiritual benefits of his blessings far outweigh our sacrifices. Have you withheld your love, your children, or your time from him? Trust him to provide (22:8).

22:13 Notice the parallel between the ram offered on the altar as a substitute for Isaac and Christ offered on the cross as a substitute for us. Whereas God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, God did not spare his own Son, Jesus, from dying on the cross. If Jesus had lived, the rest of humankind would have died. God sent his only Son to die for us so that we could be spared from the eternal death we deserve and instead receive eternal life (John 3:16).

Abraham Tested - Verses 15-19

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time¹⁶ 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." ¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

22:15-18 Abraham received abundant blessings because he obeyed God. God promised to give Abraham's descendants the ability to conquer their enemies. In addition, God promised Abraham children and grandchildren who would in turn bless the whole earth. People's lives would be changed as a result of knowing of the faith of Abraham and his descendants. We often think of blessings as gifts that we will enjoy. But when God blesses us, his blessings may also overflow to others—today and into eternity.

Nahor's Sons - Verses 20-24

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.

22:20-24 This paragraph has only one significance, namely, that of disclosing the family connection of Rebekah, whose marriage to Isaac was about to be related. In those days, there was not much travel between various parts of the Mid-east, and Abraham evidently learned for the first time, through chance passers-by of the children of his brother.