

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 22: February 14-21

Genesis 22

Throughout his life, Abraham experienced many different trials that helped him to grow in his faith. Some of these tests he passed with flying colors, others he failed miserably. However, all these experiences—both the failures and the successes—helped Abraham to grow spiritually. But in chapter 22, Abraham faces the most difficult test in his life. Here, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. Would Abraham have the faith required to obey God even when it didn't make sense? In addition to the lesson about faith and obedience, we also see in this chapter a foreshadowing of the great sacrifice God would make for us when He sent His Son to die for our sins.

Read Genesis 22:1-8

1. How does verse 1 introduce the events of this chapter?
2. How did God describe Isaac in verse 2?
3. Where did God tell Abraham to go to sacrifice Isaac? (22:2; see also 2 Chron. 3:1)

Many people who read this passage for the first time, think, “How could God ask Abraham to do such a horrible thing?” Atheist, Richard Dawkins calls this passage, a “disgraceful story...of child abuse.”¹ However, we need to read this passage in the context of the time and culture when it took place. Many of the false gods of that time demanded child sacrifice. God wanted Abraham to grow in his faith and know that his dedication to Yahweh was just as strong as that of the pagans. We should also note that this was a test. Paul Kissling writes,

Because of the extraordinary nature of the test and the moral qualms which it would raise in the original and later audiences, the reader is informed first of all that what is to follow is only a test. God never intends that Abraham actually follow through with it.²

¹ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2008), 275.

² Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 190.

4. What did Abraham do in verse 3?
5. How long did it take them to get within sight of their destination? (22:4)
6. What did Abraham say to his servants in verse 5?
7. What did Abraham do in verse 6?

There are several images in this story that give us a preview of the gospel. Kent Hughes observes,

Significantly the Genesis Rabbah, a pre-Christian Jewish midrash, commented that Isaac with the wood on his back was like a condemned man, carrying his own cross. Indeed the image was truly prophetic of Jesus, who John's Gospel describes as "bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull" (John 19:17).³

8. What did Isaac ask his father in verse 7?
9. How did Abraham answer his son's question? (22:8)

Read Genesis 22:9-14

10. What did Abraham do to his son in verse 9?
11. What happened when Abraham was about to kill his son? (22:10-11)
12. What did the Angel of the LORD say to Abraham in verse 12?

Of course, God already knew Abraham's heart and the strength of his faith. God also knew that Abraham needed this test in order to grow spiritually and develop a stronger faith. However, if God is omniscient (knowing everything), how could He say, “Now I know” in verse 12? This may be an example of anthropomorphic language, where God is described with human characteristics to help the reader relate to God. More likely, the word “know” in verse 12, is describing an experiential knowledge. John Walton notes,

³ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 302.

We must differentiate between knowledge as *cognition* and knowledge as *experience*. We can agree that God knew ahead of time what Abraham was going to do. But there is ample evidence throughout Scripture that God desires us to act out our faith and worship regardless of the fact that he knows our hearts.⁴

13. What did Abraham offer as a sacrifice to the LORD in verse 13?

14. What did Abraham name that place in verse 14?

The God who tests us is the same God who provides for us. For every challenge we face in life God is providing for us something good that can help us to grow closer to Him. He is Jehovah Jireh—our Provider. The ultimate provision this event points us to is the salvation we have in Christ. Kissling writes,

The Lord is the focus of Abraham's statement. He saw to it that Abraham and Sarah had a son. He saw to it that a ram was caught in the thicket. He saw to it that this happened on the mountain where the Temple would later be built. As Christians we know that he saw to it that his son died on a cross for the sins of all humanity not far from this very mountain.⁵

Read Genesis 22:15-24

15. What did promises did the LORD repeat to Abraham? (22:15-18)

16. Why did God confirm His promises to Abraham? (22:16-18)

17. Where did Abraham live after this event? (22:19)

18. What was Abraham told about his brother Nahor? (22:20-24)

19. What circumstances have tested your faith? How did those events effect you and your relationship with God?

20. In what area of your life will you ask God to give you the strength to be obedient?

⁴ John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 514.

Sermon Notes 2/14/21

“Abraham and Isaac”

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 22?

1. Make the Lord our first _____.

Genesis 22:1-2

Genesis 22:11-12

Matthew 10:37-39

2. Put our faith into _____.

Genesis 22:3

Genesis 22:4-5

Hebrews 11:17

James 2:21-23

3. Trust the Lord as our _____.

Genesis 22:8

Genesis 22:13-14

1 John 4:9-10



Rembrandt, *The Sacrifice of Abraham*, 1635

⁵ Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2*, 198.