

Lesson 18: God Gave Isaac; God Delivered Isaac from Death

Today, we look at the promise that God made to Abraham--The promise of a son. The promise to Abraham is grossly ignored by most of Christendom. Here, God does the impossible. You might call it the "Isaac Factor." What we're going to read and talk about today is the foundation of the gospel message and any understanding of God's purpose with the earth, mankind and Jesus Christ, must operate upon the axis of the promise to Abraham.

The promise to Abraham was also made by God to "the fathers" of Israel, Abraham, Issac and Jacob and constitutes the second of the three great promises that God has made. Even though Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children, God had promised to give them a son.

Before we continue, let's review last week's lesson.

Questions for Review from Lesson 17:

What did God tell Abram after Lot left him?

- a. *God told Abram that He would give him all the land of Canaan.*
 - b. *God promised that Abram's descendants would number more than the stars.*
 - c. *God said that Abram's descendants would go to live in another country and that they would be ill-treated for four hundred years, but after that time, God would bring them back to the land of Canaan which God had promised to Abram.*
2. What new names did God give to Abram and Sarai? *Abraham and Sarah.*
 3. Why couldn't Abraham and Sarah have a child unless God performed a miracle?
 - a. *Sarah was unable to have a child.*
 - b. *They were both too old. Abraham was now 100 years old, and Sarah was 90 years old.*
 4. Who created the first man and woman and gives life to every baby? *God.*
 5. Is there anything which God wants to do but cannot? *No, God can do everything He wants to do.*
 6. Who knows the future of every person? *Only God.*
 7. Did God know about all the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah? *Yes.*
 8. If people ignore God, will He bypass them and not punish them? *No, God is interested in all people. He is the judge of every person.*
 9. Why didn't God immediately punish the evil people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and why doesn't God immediately punish sinners now?
Because God is loving, merciful, gracious, and patient, He gives people time to change their minds and trust in Him.
 10. Does God merely threaten but never punish sinners? *No, even though God is patient, He will eventually punish sinners.*
 11. Can anyone stop God from punishing people when He decides they have had sufficient time to repent (change their minds)? *No, God is supreme. No one is greater than He is.*
 12. Why did the Lord send His angels to rescue Lot, his wife, and his family? *Because Lot agreed with God that he was a sinner and trusted in God's promises to send the Deliverer.*
 13. Why did God turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt? *Because she disobeyed the command of the Lord when He told them they must not look back at the burning cities.*

A. Introduction: Trying to help God keep His promise.

In our last lesson we read that Abraham believed God, and God credited Abraham's faith to him as righteousness.

- Today we are going to study the greatest test of Abraham's faith.
- But more important than Abraham's faith is the faithful God in whom he trusted.

Sarah was the wife of Abraham and Hagar was her servant. God had promised Abraham many descendants, but, ten years after the promise, Sarah was still unable to have children, and they were both on the verge of becoming too old to have children at all. They also were becoming impatient in waiting for God's promise, so they tried to help God out. Isn't that what we do so often, we feel like God is not going to come through or make good on his promises, so we try to help him out, as though God needs our help.

So Sarah chose to give her servant Hagar to Abraham, in accordance with the custom of day, so that Sarah could have a child through her.

Genesis 16:2 (GW)

² So Sarai said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Why don't you sleep with my slave? Maybe I can build a family through her." Abram agreed with Sarai.

B. The God Who Hears

Hagar is now pregnant with Abraham's son, and seeing Hagar pregnant, Sarah begins to deal harshly with her because she resents Hagar's ability to have a child. Also, who knows, maybe Hagar might've flaunted and bragged about her ability to please Abraham and Sarah's inability to do so in terms of becoming pregnant. So, it finally gets so bad that Hagar runs away and flees to the desert to escape the resentment of Sarah, her mistress.

In the desert, Hagar met the Messenger or Angel of the Lord as she was resting by a spring in the desert. And at this moment, she was despairing of life itself. She was ready to throw in the towel on life itself.

Genesis 16:9-13 (GW)

⁹ The Messenger of the LORD said to her, "Go back to your owner, and place yourself under her authority."

¹⁰ The Messenger of the LORD also said to her, "I will give you many descendants. No one will be able to count them because there will be so many."

¹¹ Then the Messenger of the LORD said to her, "You are pregnant, and you will give birth to a son. You will name him Ishmael [God Hears], because the LORD has heard your cry of distress.

¹² He will be as free and wild as an untamed donkey. He will fight with everyone, and everyone will fight with him. He will have conflicts with all his relatives."

¹³ Hagar named the LORD, who had been speaking to her, "You Are the God Who Watches Over Me." She said, "This is the place where I watched {the one} who watches over me."

I think it is significant that Hagar knew it was the Lord who was speaking to you and named Him, **The God Who Watches Over Me**. The Hebrew is El Roi (el-ro-he). Isn't that a awesome name for God, the One who watches over me and you. God watches over those who are His children. For me, this is very comforting. God knows me and knows what I am going through at this very moment. Hagar was despairing of life itself and ready to end it all and the Lord shows up and tells her that He understands and that He cares for her and He knows exactly what she's going through. For me, that is so encouraging. God sees and knows you and me and everything that is going on in our lives.

Ask *El Roi*, the God who sees you, to open your eyes to His work and to increase your faith even and especially when His promises seem impossible to fulfill.

The Angel of the Lord relayed this promise from God: “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude” ([Genesis 16:10](#)). And the Lord tells Hagar to name her son, Ishmael which means “God hears.” The Lord goes on to say that Ishmael will fight with everyone and he will have conflicts with his relatives. And we’re witnessing that at this very time. The Arab people—those who are in the religion of Islam, they are the sons of Ishmael and there is a constant struggle between Islam and the Jews as well as Christians. In fact, Islam believes that the child of promise is Ishmael, not Isaac.

Now, we turn our attention back on Abraham and Sarah in Gen. 18:11-12...

C. God fulfilled His promise and gave Abraham and Sarah a son.

Genesis 18:11-12 (NLT)

¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children.

¹² So she laughed silently to herself and said, “How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?”

Psalms 115:3 (NLT)

³ Our God is in the heavens, and he does as he wishes.

Jeremiah 32:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ “O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!

Acts 17:26 (NLT)

²⁶ From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 (NLT)

¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things.

¹² Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.

Psalms 24:1 (NLT) ¹

The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

God is the central focus of this story and of the whole Bible.

Theme: God is all-powerful.

Why won't God settle for anything less than the path of impossibility? The reason is that God wants to show that nothing is too difficult for the Lord. That includes everything going on in your life right now. There's nothing that you are facing that is too difficult for the Lord.

Why is the promise to Abraham relevant?

The importance of the promise to Abraham is massively relevant to all believers in the Bible

Consider these points:

This promise to Abraham is described by Paul as THE GOSPEL:

- **Galatians 3:8-9 (NLT)**

⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would declare the Gentiles to be righteous because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you."

⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith

- The apostle Paul, when imprisoned for preaching the gospel claimed that it was because of his hope in the promises to the fathers of Israel (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) that he was being condemned: **Acts 26:5-6 (NLT)**

When a person is without Christ, it means that they are strangers to the "covenants of promise", meaning that to be in Christ is to be related to them:

Ephesians 2:12 (NLT)

¹² In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

One of the reasons for Jesus Christ's work was to fulfill and confirm this promise to Abraham.

Romans 15:8 (NLT)

⁸ Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors.

What was the promise to Abraham?

The details of the promise to Abraham unfolded gradually throughout his life. Abraham's faithful obedience was rewarded by further details being revealed to him.

Here is an outline of the promise and its different aspects:

- The initial promise given at UR – Genesis 12:2-3

- Abraham would become a great nation and a great name.
- God would bless those that blessed him and curse those that cursed him
- That in Abraham eventually ALL nations will be blessed.

After entering the land God was to show him Abraham was then given the following promise at Shechem – Genesis 12:7

- Abraham would have children (seed) who would inherit the land—the land we now call Israel.

After an example of Abraham’s unselfish attitude, where Abraham gave his nephew, Lot, first choice over which land he could go and graze his cattle on, these further revelations occur at Bethel- Genesis 13:14-17

- Abraham and his seed would inherit the land of Israel forever
- His seed would be multitudinous

When Abraham showed that he believed in God (Genesis 15:6), God makes a covenant with Abraham by sacrifice.

- The boundaries of the land which God would give to Abraham and his seed are defined.
- Part of these boundaries include present day Israel which was given to Abraham and his seed (the Israelites, or today’s Jews) by God Himself. Israel does not belong to the Palestinians or any other people group. It was given by God to His chosen people, the Jews.

What does the promise to Abraham mean?

The seed of Abraham

Galatians 3:16 (NLT)

¹⁶ God gave the promises to Abraham and his child. And notice that the Scripture doesn’t say “to his children,” as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says “to his child”—and that, of course, means Christ.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. **Matthew 1:1**

The verses here on the screen show the importance and meaning of the promise to Abraham. Jesus Christ is the promised seed! The land of Israel was promised to Abraham and to his seed, Jesus Christ. How can others share in this promise?

Galatians 3:26-29 (NLT)

²⁶ For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on the character of Christ, like putting on new clothes.

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

So a belief, or a faith, in Jesus Christ and an understanding of these promises enable us to be heirs of the promise to Abraham! As Peter puts it:

2 Peter 1:4 (NLT)

⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

The Bible teaches that by belief and baptism, a person is considered as being **"IN CHRIST"** who in turn is Abraham's seed – the promise from God is that **"IN THY SEED shall all nations be blessed"**. Abraham's seed then was firstly a singular aspect (Christ) but it also has a multitude aspect (believers in the promises through Christ), who are as the "sand and stars" for multitude.

D. Abraham's Visit with 3 Heavenly Strangers

We pick up today's lesson in Genesis 18 where Abraham has an encounter with three heavenly visitors:

Genesis 18:1-15 (NLT)

¹ The LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day.

² He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground.

³ "My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while.

⁴ Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet.

⁵ And since you've honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey." "All right," they said. "Do as you have said."

⁶ So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get three large measures of your best flour, knead it into dough, and bake some bread."

⁷ Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a tender calf and gave it to his servant, who quickly prepared it.

⁸ When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

⁹ "Where is Sarah, your wife?" the visitors asked. "She's inside the tent," Abraham replied.

¹⁰ Then one of them said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!" Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent.

¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children.

¹² So she laughed silently to herself and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?"

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me

have a baby?’

¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, “I didn’t laugh.” But the LORD said, “No, you did laugh.”

By this time, Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90.

- Sarah had laughed when God said she would have a child.
- Sarah had never had a child. She knew it was naturally impossible at her age.
- But nothing is impossible with God; He can do anything He wants to do.

Theme: God is faithful; He never changes.

Many years had passed since God first promised to give Abraham a son, but God hadn’t forgotten His promise.

- He had not changed His mind.
- Sarah had a son just as God had promised.
- Abraham and Sarah called their son Isaac.

READ **Genesis 21:1-3 (NLT)**

¹ The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised.

² She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. And Abraham named their son Isaac.

(POINT TO ISAAC ON THE CHRONOLOGICAL CHART.)

Theme: God is supreme and sovereign.

God could decide to give Abraham and Sarah a son because He is the Creator of all people and all things.

- God gives life to all people everywhere.
- He gave life to our ancestors.
- He gave life to each of us and to our children.

This world and everyone in it belongs to God.

- Abraham and Sarah belonged to God.
- Their son Isaac belonged to God.

With the birth of Isaac, the rivalry between Hagar and Sarah soon rears its ugly head, manifesting itself at Isaac’s “weaning party.” In many cultures, people celebrate the ending or cessation of breastfeeding, kind of like the celebration that goes on in a home when the child no longer needs to be in diapers and that’s one less expense in your budget every week.

During the celebration, however, something goes wrong. Although the exact nature of the offense is unclear, Ishmael did something toward Isaac that upsets Sarah enough that she asks Abraham to

send Hagar and her son away, never to return. Yet, Ishmael isn't just Hagar's son, he is Abraham's son, and Abraham doesn't want to see him go. While contemplating what to do, God appears to Abraham and assures him that Ishmael and Hagar will be okay, and that Ishmael's descendants will someday be a great nation. So, with this assurance, Abraham says farewell to Hagar and his beloved son.

This isn't the last we see of Ishmael or his descendants who are called the Ishmaelites. Later in the Bible, when Abraham dies, Ishmael returns to help Isaac bury their father.

E. God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac.

Theme: God communicates with man.

Many years passed by, and Isaac grew to be a young man. His father and mother loved him.

Abraham believed that all of God's promises concerning the coming Deliverer were to be fulfilled through Isaac and his descendants.

One day God told Abraham to do a most unexpected and difficult thing.

Theme: God is supreme and sovereign.

Genesis 22:1-2 (NLT)

¹ Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

² "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

God was testing Abraham to see if he loved Isaac more than he loved God. Now you might ask, "Why would Abraham bargain over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah and not over the fate of his own son?" The text doesn't say, but many scholars feel that it is precisely because of Abraham's experience with Sodom and Gomorrah that makes it unnecessary for him to bargain here. Abraham knows that no matter what God does, He does it for a reason. So, Abraham silently obeys.

What authority did God have to tell Abraham to take Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice?

-Compare:

- Does your neighbor or anyone else have the right to tell you what to do with your children, your house, your car, or your possessions? No! Why not? Because they are yours. They belong to you. They don't belong to your neighbor.
- But didn't Isaac belong to Abraham? Wasn't Isaac Abraham's son? Didn't Abraham have authority over Isaac? Isaac was Abraham's son, but who gave Isaac his life? Who gave Isaac to Abraham and Sarah? God did! Isaac belonged to God.

God gives life to every person and every living thing. God created everything. Therefore, God has authority over all people and all things.

F. Abraham believed God.

Theme: Man must have faith in order to please God and be saved. Think about what was happening!

- What a surprise this must have been to Abraham!
- What an impossibly difficult test!
- Had God changed His mind about Isaac and His promises?
- How could God's promises be fulfilled through Isaac if Abraham killed him?
- Had God changed His mind?
- Had God decided that the Deliverer would not be one of Isaac's descendants?

How did Abraham respond?

- Even though Abraham was told to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, he did not doubt or question God.
- He accepted what God had said.
- How could he respond like this?

He knew and believed God.

- He knew that God would not lie.
- He knew that God would not give him promises and then change His mind.
- He trusted God and believed that God would still keep His word.

Wasn't this an impossible thing for a man to do?

- Abraham was just a person like us.
- This test of his faith was terribly difficult—we might say, impossible.
- But Abraham had put his full trust in God.
- He had come to realize that God never fails!

Compare:

It is hard for us to imagine one who never fails to keep His word. Oh, our intentions are often very good, but we just don't follow through. We get busy, or tired, or distracted, and we fail to do the thing we promised.

Read Hebrews 11:17-19 (NLT)

¹⁷ It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac,

¹⁸ even though God had told him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted."

¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead.

God is not like us. Abraham discovered just what each person needs to discover for himself: God never fails to do the things He has promised to do. We can fully trust Him. This is what God wants us to do—BELIEVE Him.

Hebrews 11:19 says that Abraham believed that even if he did kill Isaac in obedience to God, God would raise Isaac from the dead.

- He knew it was impossible for man.
- But He trusted God to do this.

Compare:

Abraham was different from Adam and Eve. When they were in the garden, God had told Adam not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if he did, that day he would surely die. But when Satan told Eve they wouldn't die, Adam and Eve believed Satan. They doubted the word of God, and they disobeyed Him. Adam and Eve did not believe God, but Abraham did. He believed that God would keep His word.

Because Abraham believed and trusted in God, he immediately made preparations to go to the place where God promised to lead him.

Genesis 22:3-5 (NLT)

³ The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about.

⁴ On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

⁵ "Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back." Genesis 22:3-5.

G. Isaac questions and Abraham answers.

Theme: Man must have faith in order to please God.

Read Genesis 22:6-7 (NLT)

⁶ So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together,

⁷ Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?"

Consider Isaac's situation.

- He had undoubtedly witnessed many sacrifices.
- He could not understand why they had not taken a sheep with them to sacrifice.
- Abraham had not told Isaac what God had told him to do.

Read Genesis 22:8 (NLT)

⁸ “God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son,” Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

Abraham trusted God.

Believing God is the most important thing that we can do.

- Just listening to a sermon or even hearing or reading the words of the Bible will not deliver us from Satan’s control.
- We must accept God’s words and trust in Him.

-Compare:

If you were sick and went to the doctor and he prescribed medicine, would it be any benefit to you if he only told you about the medicine and how it could heal you? Would just listening to him tell about it heal you? Of course not!

Only listening to God’s words will not help us. If we only listen but refuse to believe, then we are doing what Satan did when he spoke to Eve: We are calling God a liar. God will never accept those who refuse to believe Him. God accepts those who, like Abraham, believe all God says and trust only in Him.

H. Abraham bound Isaac.

Theme: Man is a sinner. He needs God and is helpless to save himself.

Theme: God is holy and righteous. He demands death as the payment for sin.

Genesis 22:9-10 (GW)

⁹ When they came to the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied up his son Isaac and laid him on top of the wood on the altar.

¹⁰ Next, Abraham picked up the knife and took it in his hand to sacrifice his son.

There was no escape for Isaac.

- He was bound and laid on the altar.
- Abraham had lifted up the knife to kill him.
- God had commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, and there was no way for Isaac to escape once he was on the altar.

-Compare:

It was the same when God shut the door of the ark after Noah. Noah’s family and all the animals and birds were safe inside, but there was no escape for the people outside the ark who didn’t believe God and were shut out.

And there was no escape for the people in the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when God sent down fire on them. There was no escape for Lot's wife when she disobeyed God and looked back at the city of Sodom.

God saved Noah and his family from the flood. God saved Lot and his daughters from the fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Only God could save Isaac from being killed.

Is there any way that we can save ourselves from death and everlasting punishment for our sins? No! We cannot save ourselves. God will punish all sin. No one can escape from God.

God and only God can make a way to escape. Do you know what God did? Well, let's continue our study here in Genesis and find out.

I. God provided a ram to take Isaac's place.

Theme: God communicates with man.

Theme: God is loving, merciful, and gracious.

Read Genesis 22:10-12 (GW)

¹⁰ Next, Abraham picked up the knife and took it in his hand to sacrifice his son.

¹¹ But the Messenger of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes?" he answered.

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 did not refuse to give me your son, your only son."

God saved Isaac; God told Abraham not to kill his son.

Isaac couldn't be saved, however, unless there was another suitable sacrifice to offer to God.

- Abraham and Isaac didn't have a suitable sacrifice with them.
- But God provided another offering instead of Isaac.
- Abraham could not provide the sacrifice.

God graciously provided a ram instead of Isaac.

Read Genesis 22:13 (GW)

¹³ When Abraham looked around, he saw a ram behind him caught by its horns in a bush. So Abraham took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

Galatians 3:6-9 (GW)

⁶ Abraham serves as an example. He believed God, and that faith was regarded by God to be his approval of Abraham.

⁷ You must understand that people who have faith are Abraham's descendants.

⁸ Scripture saw ahead of time that God would give his approval to non-Jewish people who have faith. So Scripture announced the Good News to Abraham ahead of time when it said, "Through you all the

people of the world will be blessed.”

⁹ So people who believe are blessed together with Abraham, the man of faith.

Visual: ABRAHAM OFFERS ISAAC”

Theme: God is holy and righteous. He demands death as the payment for sin.

Theme: Man can come to God only according to God’s will and plan.

God caused the ram to be caught by its horns in the bush.

- If it had been caught by any other part of its body, it would have injured itself by struggling and trying to get free.
- If it had been injured, it would not have been an acceptable offering to God.

God would only accept a healthy, strong animal as a sacrifice. Because God is perfect, He will only accept whatever is perfect.

God provided an acceptable sacrifice in place of Isaac.

Theme: God is faithful; He never changes.

God is faithful.

- He kept His promise to Abraham.
- Through Isaac, God would give Abraham many descendants.

Abraham took Isaac off the altar and put the ram which God had provided on the altar so it could be killed instead of Isaac.

- Abraham killed the ram and burned it as an offering to God.
- The ram died instead of Isaac.
- The ram was his substitute.
- God saved Isaac by providing the ram to die in his place.

J. Abraham trusted God to send the Deliverer.

Theme: Man must have faith in order to please God and be saved.

Read Genesis 22:14-19 (GW)

¹⁴ Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide. It is still said today, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

¹⁵ Then the Messenger of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time

¹⁶ and said, “I am taking an oath on my own name, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not refused to give me your son, your only son,

¹⁷ I will certainly bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of their enemies' cities.

¹⁸ Through your descendant all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and together they left for Beersheba. Abraham remained in Beersheba.

Abraham called the place where God provided the ram “The Lord will provide.”

- God provided a ram to die instead of Isaac.
- Abraham believed that God would also provide the Deliverer to rescue mankind from the power of Satan and from the punishment of sin.

K. Conclusion

So, why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? After all, if this was simply a test of Abraham’s faith, they why not ask Abraham to jump off a cliff or slide down the pyramids...or even sacrifice himself?

While many proposals have been put forth, the ultimate reason God would ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac is that Isaac, more than anything or anyone else embodies God’s promises to Abraham. Without Isaac, there is no HEIR, no NATION, no PROMISES, and no BLESSINGS. By asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, God is asking Abraham to demonstrate his complete trust in Him for his future. Abraham demonstrates his complete trust, and for this he not only receives God’s promises, but also experiences the “good life.”

From the Bible’s perspective, one cannot truly achieve the good life without living a good life (that is, doing what’s right, trusting God and loving others). One may make it to the top of the heap, but being the top dog is of no real value if the heap is nothing more than broken promises, broken relationships, and broken commandments. Abraham has undergone some serious character development and shown that he has a heart for God and trusts God with his life and his future.

With Isaac spared and an acceptable sacrifice provided in his place, the line of the promised Deliverer, or Messiah was preserved. As Abraham discovered, God can be trusted to fulfill His promises. God is worthy of our trust!

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW:

1. Why was God able to give Abraham and Sarah a son even though he was 100 years old and she was 90?

- a. Because God gives life to all people everywhere.
- b. God is omnipotent. He can do anything He wants to do.

2. What authority did God have to ask Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice?

- a. God is the Creator of all things; therefore, He is the owner of all things.
- b. God gave life to Isaac.

3. Did Abraham think that God had changed His mind about Isaac being the father of a great nation and the forefather of the Deliverer? **No, Abraham believed and trusted in God because he was convinced that God always keeps His promises.**
4. What did Abraham think God might do? **Abraham thought that, if he did kill Isaac as God had commanded him, then God would raise Isaac from the dead.**
5. Once Abraham had bound Isaac and put him on the altar, was there any way Isaac could deliver himself from death? **No, Isaac could not deliver himself from death.**
6. Is there any way a person can save himself from the payment of death and everlasting punishment which he deserves because of his sins? **No, no one can save himself or herself from the punishment of God. No one can escape from God.**
7. Who spoke to Abraham and saved Isaac from death? **God did.**
8. Was there anyone else who could have saved Isaac from death except God? **No.**
9. Who provided a sacrifice to take Isaac's place? **God did.**
10. Why was the ram held in the bush by its horns? **Because God is perfect, He would only accept an offering if it was strong and healthy.**
11. Why did Abraham call the place where God provided the ram "The Lord will provide"? **Because Abraham believed that, just as the Lord provided the ram instead of Isaac, the Lord would one day provide the Deliverer who would overcome Satan and deliver mankind from Satan's power and everlasting punishment.**

Next Lesson 19: Isaac's sons, Jacob & Esau: Two Nations