

God tested Abraham's trust in Him in a totally unexpected way. God used Abraham to picture the greatest example of His love—long before Jesus gave His life for us.

GOD TESTS ABRAHAM'S FAITH

by Joshua Travers

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’

“And he said, ‘Here I am.’

“Then He said, ‘Take now 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.’”

QUIZ TIME

What did God command Abraham to do?

This conversation between God and Abraham in Genesis 22:1-2 was the beginning of probably the greatest trial of Abraham's life. It is a story of faith that goes beyond Abraham's time. It has a direct impact on us today.

But realize this was a very unusual event—something God does not ask of fathers today.

THE SON OF PROMISE

God said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, *whom you love*” (verse 2, emphasis added). God asked Abraham to sacrifice the son he loved deeply.

QUIZ TIME

What had God promised Abraham?

Abraham had waited for many years for Isaac to be born, even when it seemed impossible (Genesis 17:15-17). God promised Abraham that he would become the father of many nations through Isaac. The command to sacrifice Isaac seemed to contradict the promises that God had made to him.

To Abraham, this must have been confusing. It might have seemed like God was going back on His promises. Instead of continuing his family through Isaac, God was going to have him sacrificed. But Abraham didn't say, “I quit.” He did as he was told.

In spite of all the confusion, Abraham stepped out in faith. He knew that God would fulfill His promises, even if that meant doing what seemed impossible. He knew God could raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:19).

MANY CHANCES

Abraham had many chances to quit and keep from sacrificing Isaac. After God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the Bible says, “So Abraham rose early in the morning” (Genesis 22:3). Abraham probably spent all night thinking about what God had told him to do. He had all night to decide whether he would obey God or not.

The temptation and chance to stop didn't end there. The **special place** where God commanded Abraham to do the sacrifice was three days' travel away from where Abraham lived (verse 4). For three days Abraham rode his donkey, looking at the son that he knew

he would be sacrificing. Those few days would have been some of the worst of Abraham's life.

As they got near the mountain, Abraham and Isaac continued on foot. Isaac carried the wood, and Abraham took the fire and the knife.

When they finally reached the place, Abraham had to create the altar on which he would sacrifice his own son. After the altar was built, he set the wood in place (verse 9). Then the moment finally came. After days of thinking and preparing, it was time.

The whole thing would have been all too real as Abraham prepared to do what God had said. Then he picked up the knife, took a deep breath, and ...

A GOD WHO SAVES

“But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’

“So he said, ‘Here I am.’

“And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’

“Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son” (verses 11-13).

God saved Isaac! In spite of all the chances to stop, Abraham continued in faith. He passed the test. Knowing that Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac, God stepped in and instead provided a ram for the burnt offering.

God is not a God who tests us pointlessly. Instead, “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Just as God was with Abraham and Isaac in this time of trial, so will He be with us in our trials!

WHAT'S THE POINT?

What was the purpose of having Abraham prepare to sacrifice Isaac? Why would God have Abraham go through that? Here are two reasons this story was recorded in the Bible:

- 1. To test Abraham's faith.** God had great things planned for Abraham. He knew Abraham would need strong trust and character. He wanted to know if Abraham actually had the faith to sacrifice Isaac. The only way for God to know was for Abraham to actually prepare to do it. Faith isn't just a feeling. It's something that we show by our actions (James 2:14-24). For his faith, God gave Abraham many great blessings (Genesis 22:15-18).
- 2. To represent Christ's sacrifice.** The sacrifice of Isaac was a symbol of Christ's sacrifice. Both were firstborn sons who were promised for years and greatly loved by their fathers who were prepared to sacrifice them. God wants us to understand how much He loves us. He was willing to sacrifice His Son because it was the only way to save us. We deserve the death penalty because of our sins. But Jesus was willing to pay that penalty for us!

The story of Abraham preparing to sacrifice Isaac is an incredible story that shows us what true faith is like. It shows us that God is with us, even when things don't seem to make sense. In the end, God will be there for us during our trials, just as He was there for Abraham and Isaac.

QUIZ TIME

What did God provide Abraham in the thicket?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. What is faith?
2. Why did God want Abraham to have strong faith?
3. How was what Abraham and Isaac did like what God the Father and Jesus Christ would do?
4. How was it different?

For more about Abraham and his remarkable faith, read “[The Faith of Abraham.](#)”



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Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

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