



# GENESIS

The Book of Beginnings

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## LESSON 8: IS THIS TEST NECESSARY?



God often tests us in ways that reveal our heart toward Him (1 Thess. 2:4) and offers opportunities to grow in our relationship with him. God's will sometimes doesn't make sense...in those cases we are to especially put our full trust in Him (Prov. 3:5-6).

As you read this passage (Genesis 22:1-19) notice how it illustrates God's provision of salvation and the sacrifice it took.

### A. CENTRAL QUESTION

The Bible has many difficult passages for modern readers, but few are more challenging than the moment when God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. This story causes us to ask a lot of troubling questions. What kind of God would ask for this? Is God commanding child sacrifice? Isn't this request in conflict with everything else God seems to value?

### B. THE TEXT: GENESIS 22:1-19 (NIV)

#### The Presentation of the Test (22:1-2)

*"Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 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."*

#### Abraham's Response to the Test (22:3-10)

*"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. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 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." 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, 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?"<sup>8</sup> Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son."

### **God's Response to Abraham (22:11-19)**

"But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied.<sup>12</sup> '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.'<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.'<sup>15</sup> The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time<sup>16</sup> and said, 'I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,<sup>17</sup> 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,<sup>18</sup> and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'<sup>19</sup> Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba."

### **C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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1. What kind of God would ask a father to sacrifice his son? Is God commanding child sacrifice? Isn't this request in conflict with everything else God seems to value?
2. Even though Abraham knew beforehand that Isaac would somehow survive this sacrifice (Gen. 22:5) do you think it made it any easier for him to proceed with it? Explain your answer.
3. What connection do you see with Genesis 22:1-19 and John 3:16?
4. What is the significance of the ram in this narrative?

5. How do the verses in Genesis 22:17-18 relate to the Abrahamic Covenant?

#### **D. COMMENTS**

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On the surface, this is a problematic passage. But when we notice how this story fits in with the broader context of Scripture, we see how it points us toward God's solution to the problem of death in our world. Abraham's words to Isaac ultimately point to Jesus, "God himself will provide the sacrifice."

Most people aren't disturbed by the outcome of Genesis 22. Instead, it's the fact that God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son in the first place. How could Abraham agree? This seems more like parental neglect than faithful obedience.

But remember what we've covered so far. If Isaac, the willing son, represents Jesus in the story, then Abraham stands in for God. Isaac also represents us because he was spared, so in this part of the story, the ram represents Jesus. From that angle, the story can provide comfort.

#### **E. APPLICATION**

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Genesis 22:1-19 recounts the story of Abraham being tested by God to sacrifice his son Isaac, only for God to provide a ram as a substitute sacrifice at the last moment. This passage can be applied to us today in five specific ways:

1. \_\_\_\_\_: Just as Abraham trusted in God's plan despite not understanding it fully, we can apply this trust in our own lives. We may face difficult situations or challenges that seem overwhelming, but trusting in God's providence can give us strength and peace.
2. \_\_\_\_\_: Abraham's willingness to obey God's command, even when it seemed counterintuitive or morally challenging, serves as a lesson for us today. We should strive to obey God's commands in our own lives, even when they may be difficult or unpopular.
3. \_\_\_\_\_: Like Abraham, we may face tests of faith in our lives. These tests could come in various forms, such as personal trials, moral dilemmas, or challenges to our beliefs. By remaining faithful to God in the midst of these tests, we can grow in our relationship with Him and strengthen our faith.
4. \_\_\_\_\_: The story of Abraham and Isaac also highlights God's provision. In times of need or desperation, we can trust that

God will provide for us, just as He provided the ram for Abraham's sacrifice. This can give us hope and assurance, even in the face of uncertainty.

5. \_\_\_\_\_: While we may not be called to literal sacrifice as Abraham was, we can still apply the concept of sacrifice in our lives. This could involve sacrificing our own desires or comforts for the sake of others or making sacrifices in service to God and His kingdom.

Overall, Genesis 22:1-19 serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of faith, obedience, and trust in God's providence in our lives today.

## **F. DIGGING DEEPER**

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For more about this subject go to: "Why Did God Command Abraham to Sacrifice Isaac?"

< <https://www.gotquestions.org/Abraham-Isaac.html> >

