

THE STORY OF SACRIFICE AND SON

Abraham in 2021: Genesis 22:1-19

January 24, 2021

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

Genesis 22:2

Joining Abraham in the school of faith

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Hebrews 11:17-19

- 1) This is going to be the story of sacrifice and the "unique" (*monogenēs*) son
- 2) Abraham believes God's promises, even when the response to covenant is terrifying

Abraham's is tested (like Adam, like Job, like the Exodus, like Jesus, like me!)

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

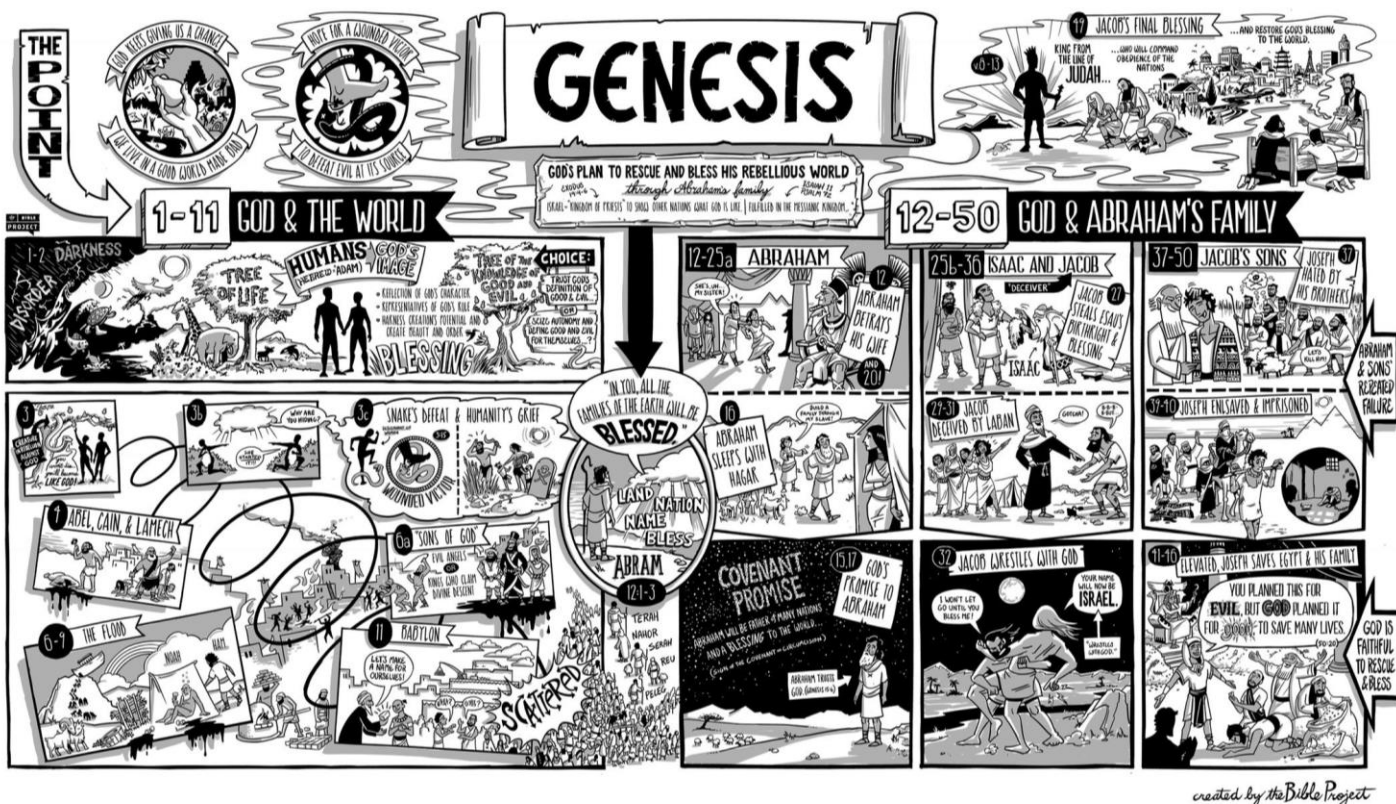
"Here I am," he replied.

² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled 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."

Genesis 22

- 1) Each "act" begins with "Here I am" and ends with Abraham leaving "together" (looking back to 12:1-9)
- 2) Please don't get sentimental – God really did ask Abraham to sacrifice his son
- 3) From the beginning, Abraham believed that God would be faithful to his promise



created by the Bible Project

The Abraham Cycle (Waltke, p. 20)

A Genealogy of Terah, 11:27-32

B Promise of a son and start of Abraham's spiritual odyssey, 12:1-9

C Abram lies about Sarai; the Lord protects her in a foreign palace, 12:10-20

D Lot settles in Sodom, 13:1-18

E Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Lot militarily, 14:1-24

F Covenant with Abraham; annunciation of Ishmael, 15:1-16:16

F' Covenant with Abraham; annunciation of Isaac, 17:1-18:15

E` Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Lot in prayer, 18:16-33

D` Lot flees doomed Sodom and settles in Moab, 19:1-38

C` Abraham lies about Sarah; God protects her in a foreign palace, 20:1-18

B` Birth of son and climax of Abraham's spiritual odyssey, 21:1-22:19

A` Genealogy of Nahor, 22:20-24

Isaac finally speaks

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?”

⁸ Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But

Genesis 22

- 1) Isaac asks the theological question: Where is the Lamb? (See John 1:29-34)
- 2) Isaac becomes the “beast of burden” – he allows himself to be bound, so the story is the *Akedah*
- 3) Just as in Hebrew, God’s provision means that he himself will “see to it” (Latin, *pro + videre*)

A theology of “because”

¹¹ But 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.”

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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.”

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ 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.

Genesis 22

- 1) Our response to God’s voice reveals the heart (see Genesis 3:8-11)
- 2) Remember: God takes the curse on himself and carries out the sacrifice of his Son
- 3) Covenant principle #4: Covenant is always confirmed in obedience (“because” three times!)

More lessons with Abraham

- 1) Fifteen years later, Abraham still remembered kindergarten – but now he’s in the graduate school of faith

³ *Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey.*

Genesis 17 (see connection to 12:1-9)

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Romans 4

²⁰ *You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.*

James 2:20-24

- 2) Yes, this is the Hebrew Scripture’s version of John 3:16

¹⁶ *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

John 3:16-17

- 3) The heart of sacrifice has always been about what is not withheld (see Micah 6:7)

³¹ *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

Romans 8:31-32

- 4) The testing works both ways!

² *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

James 1

Resources for further studies of Genesis 12-25

The Bible Project team has a great video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4isSyennFo>, and poster and study for Genesis at <https://bibleproject.com/learn/genesis-12-50/>

Spurgeon has several good sermons for Genesis 22; I like Spurgeon's "Jehovah Jireh" at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/jehovah-jireh/#flipbook/> and "Mature Faith" at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons15.xxi.html>

For Genesis 22, I appreciate Kenneth A Matthews' commentary in the New American Commentary series (Broadman and Holman, 2005). His commentary on Genesis 22 is included in my sermon notes – just ignore the JEDP stuff. Too many commentators think they must engage with modernist textual criticism in order to be taken seriously.

I like Sailhammer's commentary in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1990); Bruce Waltke's newer commentary *Genesis* (Zondervan, 2001); and Leupold's commentary on Genesis available online at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xiv.html>

monergism.com has a series of articles on Paul's thoughts on Abraham in Galatians 3 and Romans:

John Davis at http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/19/19-3/19-3-pp201-208_JETS.pdf

Moise Silve at <http://files1.wts.edu/uploads/pdf/publications/wtj/silva-fall-01.pdf>

Bob Deffinbaugh has a good series on Abraham at <https://bible.org/series/genesis-paradise-patriarchs>. His sermon on Genesis 22 is included in my notes.

Third Mill has good stuff:

Ligon Duncan's excellent intro to covenants at https://thirdmill.org/magazine/article.asp/link/jl_duncan%5Ejl_duncan.CT001.html/at/Covenant%20Theology

three videos on Abraham at <https://thirdmill.org/seminary/course.asp/vs/FA>

Alexander Maclaren has a good series on Abraham at https://ccel.org/ccel/maclaren/gen_num/gen_num.

Charles Biggs in "Reformed Perspectives" at

http://reformedperspectives.org/newfiles/cr_biggs/OT.Biggs.Genesis.15.ourcovenantgod_10.27.03.html

Good article on Galatians 3 and our connection to Abraham

John Davis at http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/19/19-3/19-3-pp201-208_JETS.pdf

Kim Riddlebarger at <https://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/an-exposition-of-galatians/Does%20the%20Promise%20Come%20by%20Faith%20or%20Works%204.pdf>

and Third Mill at

http://www.thirdmill.org/files/english/lay_people_speak/16331~3_9_99_5-22-34_PM~McL.gal3.ps.pdf