

GENESIS

22:1-24

Genesis 22:1-24

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 14th January 2024 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Genesis 21:1-3

Introduction

We have been studying our way through Genesis, the first book in the Bible, and we're about half way through its 50 chapters — this morning we'll study all of chapter 22. And since it's been about 5 weeks since we last studied it, I think it would be good to remind ourselves of the ground we've covered so far, and what's ahead of us in the coming few months.

OLD TESTAMENT 39

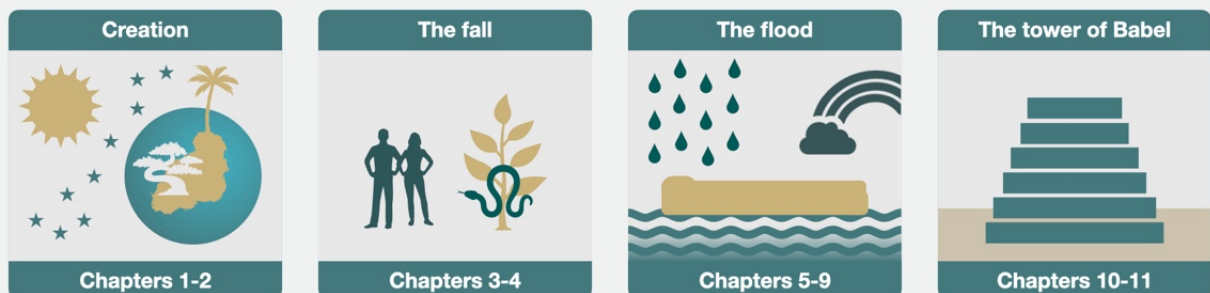
5	LAW	5	POETRY	12	MINOR PROPHETS
	GENESIS		JOB		HOSEA
	EXODUS		PSALMS		JOEL
	LEVITICUS		PROVERBS		AMOS
	NUMBERS		ECCLESIASTES		OBADIAH
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12	HISTORY	5	MAJOR PROPHETS		MICAH
	JOSHUA		ISAIAH		NAHUM
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	RUTH		LAMENTATIONS		ZEPHANIAH
	1 SAMUEL		EZEKIEL		HAGGAI
	2 SAMUEL		DANIEL		ZECHARIAH
	1 KINGS				MALACHI
	2 KINGS				
	1 CHRONICLES				
	2 CHRONICLES				
	EZRA				
	NEHEMIAH				
	ESTHER				

NEW TESTAMENT 27

4	THE GOSPELS	4	PASTORAL LETTERS
	MATTHEW		1 TIMOTHY
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	JOHN		PHILEMON
1	CHURCH HISTORY	9	OTHER LETTERS
	ACTS		HEBREWS
9	CHURCH LETTERS		JAMES
	ROMANS		1 PETER
	1 CORINTHIANS		2 PETER
	2 CORINTHIANS		1 JOHN
	GALATIANS		2 JOHN
	EPHESIANS		3 JOHN
	PHILIPPIANS		JUDE
	COLOSSIANS		REVELATION
	1 THESSALONIANS		
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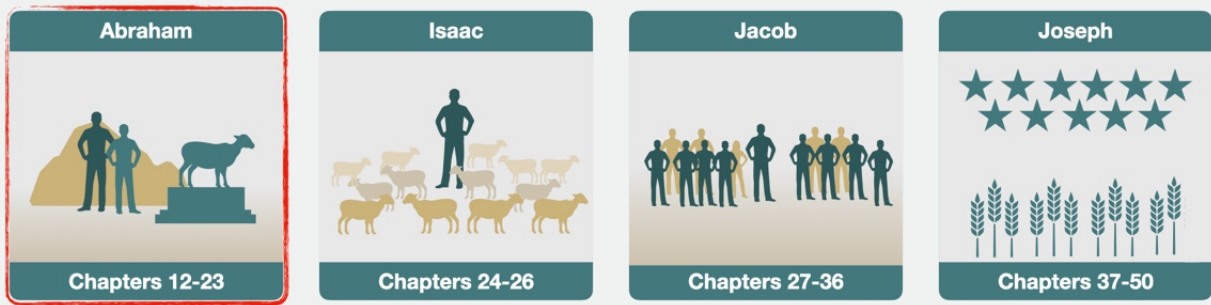
This book, of course, is the book of beginnings — for not only do we see the creation of the world, but we see the first man, first marriage, first sin, first lie, first sacrifice, first child, first murder, first mention of salvation, first defiance against God, first death, and first of so much more.

The events of Genesis



An easy way to remember the structure of this book is that it records 4 key events, and then the lives of 4 key individuals. And we start with the creation of the world and all we see, then the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden (in chapters 3-4), next (in chapters 5-9) the flood that judged the world (through which God saved Noah and his family), and then (in chapters 10 & 11) we reach the tower of Babel where we saw mankind moving further away from the Lord. And that covers the first 11 chapters.

The patriarchs of Genesis



From chapters 12-23 (where we are right now), we read about Abraham — his life, his faith, and his actions — then, from chapters 24-26 our attention will be drawn to his son, Isaac, before (in chapters 27-36) we'll find the focus is on one of *his* sons, Jacob, and in turn (in chapters 37-50), one of *his* 12 sons, Joseph. So very clearly, we're following a family line here.

Now, recapping on this man, Abraham, we *first* find that he was originally called *Abram*, and God called him to leave his family in a place called Ur, and move to the Land of Canaan. Abraham did this, though with some detour in a place called Haran. When he did eventually reach Canaan, his life was not without incident — or learning — for first he takes matters into his own hands during a time of famine, heading to Egypt, and second he takes matters into his own hands having a child through his wife's servant, Hagar, who had returned with them from that trip to Egypt. And Abraham learned the hard way in both these cases.

However, we also see great demonstrations of faith from Abraham — and courage too, with him rescuing his nephew, Lot, when he was taken captive by a group of kings. Then, in the previous chapter, we saw how he obeyed the Lord in sending Ishmael, his son through Hagar, away — symbolic of cutting away the works of the flesh.

And that brings us to this chapter — one of the most profound chapters in the Bible, where we will read that, at God's command, Abraham offers his own son as a sacrifice, yet God restrains him at the last minute when He sees that Abraham is willing to go through with it. This should certainly grab our attention — but not because of what happened at this moment per se, but because of what it pointed to — for all we read here points to Jesus, and how He would be offered for *our* sin. That is, while we're going to read a lot about Abraham and Isaac, this ultimately points to Jesus in ways worthy of our full attention — with Abraham, the father, and Isaac, his son, acting as types or models of what was to come as God the Father offered His only begotten Son for us.

Overview of chapter twenty two

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- **v1-19** — Abraham's faith, Isaac's submission
- **v20-24** — Abraham's relatives, Isaac's future

Now, we can easily break down this chapter into two parts — for both verse 1 and verse 20 start with the words “Now it came to pass *after these things...*”. And starting at verse 1, the majority of this chapter is given over to this model of Abraham and Isaac, pointing to Jesus sacrifice for us (known in Hebrew as the *Akedah*).

Then, from verses 20-24, the chapter ends with a genealogy — which we might not *think* is connected, but actually stands out as a remarkable picture for us.

Chapter twenty two

And so as we begin this chapter, we read in verse 1:

Genesis 22:1

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

So first, we read *after these things*. What things? Well, the things we read in chapter 21 — that Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah as God had promised, that he was weaned, and that Ishmael was sent away. But also, this means the events of this chapter took place after *all* we have seen in chapters 12-21 of Genesis — which we'll come back to in a moment.

And now here, we read that God tested Abraham. Not tempted, but tested. And there's a difference. For God never tempts or entices us to sin. But He does test us, and prove us, to reveal our faith (or sometimes lack thereof). And as He calls Abraham by name we see an immediate response, as Abraham says “Here I am”.

God simply called his name, and he was ready. And I wonder, are we that ready? Or if God called our name would we respond with “*Not now, Lord, I'm busy!*” Or worse, would we fail to recognise that He was calling us at all? Here, Abraham is not only walking close enough with God to hear Him, but has reached a place of complete submission to Him. And we see God continues to speak to him...

Genesis 22:2

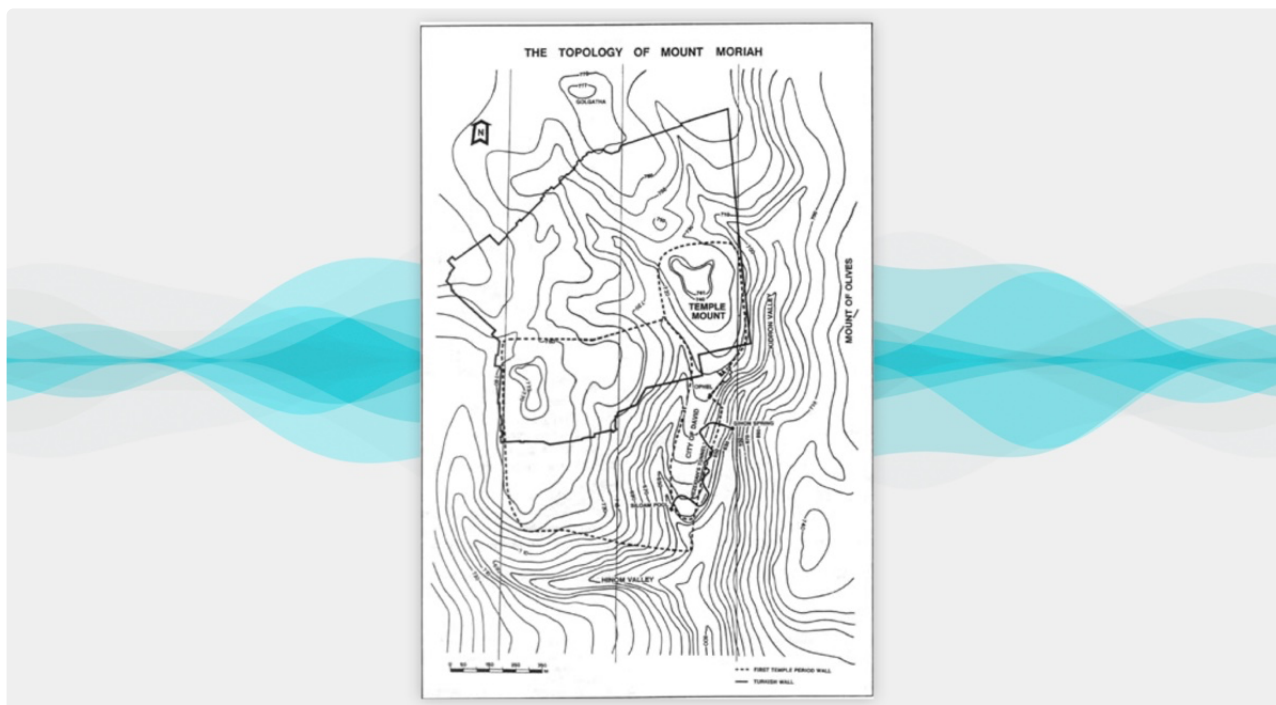
Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

This is a big deal. God says take your *only* son, Isaac — once again not even acknowledging Ishmael exists. Why? Because Ishmael was the result of Abraham's own efforts — the work of his flesh, which God couldn't bless. And rather, it was the son of promise that God was going to use in an incredible way, as model or illustration of what was to come some 1900 years after this point.

Let me be clear on this — the purpose of what God was doing here wasn't simply a test of Abraham's faith, and it's certainly not to suggest child sacrifice was permissible in any way, but rather God was showing that there would indeed have to be a man that would die as a offering for sin — but that man wasn't Isaac, it was Jesus. And so all we read here in this verse, and the following verses, is an illustration of Jesus Himself.

First as Isaac was the son of *promise*, and Abraham's *only* son in that regard, so Jesus was *also* promised — here and elsewhere — and He was *God's* only begotten Son. We also read that Abraham loved his son, Isaac, just as we read in Mark and Luke's gospels, that God the Father spoke to Jesus, saying "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

But furthermore, we read this instruction to go to the land of *Moriah*, indeed to a *specific* mountain there, and offer Isaac there as a burnt offering. Where is this place? Well, it is no other than in Jerusalem. And you might see where this is going... for mount Moriah is a ridge system that runs between the Mount of Olives and Mount Zion...



...and as shown on this topology map, it has the Kidron Valley on the east, the Hinom Vally on the south, and the Tryopean Valley on the west. And as Abraham would have approached this, he would have gradually climbed nearly 200m in elevation until reaching it's peak, some 777 meters above sea level. And it was this spot that, first, King David would later purchase — buying the threshing floor of Arunah — where the temple would subsequently be built by King Solomon.

But even more profoundly, the peak of this mountain is a place just outside the city wall to the north — a place we know as Golgotha! So what we have here is Isaac being led to the specific place where Jesus would be led some 1900 years later, where he would also be offered as a sacrifice!

And it's not like humans could have planned this — for remember that not only would this have been the last thing the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day would have hoped to emulate, but it was indeed the Roman authorities who ultimately chose where they crucified those sentenced to death. This is an incredible foreshadowing of what was to come. And indeed, Moriah literally means "Foreseen of Jehovah." — this was a preview of what was to come.

Yet another way that this points to Jesus sacrifice, is that the word translated *offering* in this verse, as Abraham is instructed to make an offering of Isaac, conveys the idea of offering or lifting up — just as Jesus was lifted up on the cross, as also foreshadowed by the bronze serpent of Numbers chapter 21), and Jesus Himself spoke of in John's gospel. We read there in chapter 12:

John 12:32-33

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

There is such incredible parallel here. And we're just getting started, for we'll see many of the details in this chapter continue to point to Jesus.

As for the instruction given to Abraham, there is no ambiguity here. Abraham knows from the start what God is asking him to do — so what does he do? We read on...

Genesis 22:3

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Abraham, then, didn't delay at all — but rather he obeyed at the earliest opportunity. He got up early, got the donkey ready, got these two young men along with Isaac, prepared the wood, and then set off for Moriah. And that's the first lesson from this, that he didn't procrastinate in doing what God had called him to do, even though it was the most gut-wrenching of requests. Second, he didn't question God's intentions, but acted in simple yet profound obedience.

But how could he do this?! I mean, just consider what has been asked of him — to offer his own *son* whom he *loved* as a burnt offering. And he gets up and goes to do it. What obedience!

The answer to how and why he did this doesn't lie in this moment, but what we read in verse 1 — that simple phrase, "after these things". Yes, on one hand that points back to chapter 21 — but it also signifies, naturally, all that happened before *that*. You see, God had been preparing Abraham for some time, and he had reached a point where he no longer trusted in himself (his own efforts and own abilities), but rather he trusted in God. But this didn't happen overnight.

Let me read to you from Jon Courson's commentary on this passage, for he gives a good illustration:

The reason Abraham could climb Mt. Moriah is the same reason Sir Edmund Hillary could climb Everest. You see, prior to Hillary's ascent up Mt. Everest, he spent five years acclimating his body to the altitude, five years allowing his lungs to expand to deal with the lack of oxygen he would encounter at that height, five years to get in shape, five years to make preparations and gather gear.

So, too, Abraham would climb his infinitely higher mountain because, like Hillary's team, there had been great preparation.

"Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham" (22:1) After what things? Fifty-seven years of things.

Leaving his home in Ur for a land God would show him was Step #1 in training for the Moriah moment. Saying goodbye to his nephew as Lot headed for Sodom was Step #2. Refusing the spoils of battle offered him by the king of Sodom was Step #3. Obeying God's command to send his son Ishmael into the desert was Step #4.

Jon Courson

The question we should ask ourselves, is how is God preparing us? How is He leading, guiding, and maturing us? Are we letting Him do that in our lives? Or are we stubbornly refusing to grow up in Him? May our hearts be soft enough to let God do this in us too, to be preparing, moulding and shaping *us*, for whatever He has called *us* to do!

Here, Abraham sets off to the place that God had told him to go — a place he would have known, because he had wandered this entire land as instructed by God back in chapter 13. And we read in verse four:

Genesis 22:4

Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

So then, this wasn't a quick thing to try and get over and done. Abraham had three days of travelling to think this through before they even got close to Moriah. Three days! Imagine how he felt each time he looked at Isaac. But more than that, this points to Jesus in the details, for from that moment Abraham received the command to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, he was as good as dead to him. Yet, what happens on this third day? We'll see that God intervenes, and Abraham in that sense receives Isaac back, as it were, from the dead. Just as Jesus would rise on the third day. Nothing is recorded here by mistake.

Genesis 22:5

And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

This is so easy to read past, but look at what Abraham says. He says "we will come back to you". It's only him and Isaac going up to Moriah. He is speaking as if both of them will return. Is he disingenuous? Is he not planning to go through with what God commanded? No, to both those questions. Rather, this is amazing evidence of the trust and confidence that Abraham now had in God, after all these years of walking with Him.

You see, in chapter 17 we read:

Genesis 17:19

Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.

That is, Abraham had heard from God Himself that Isaac would have descendants. And since Isaac was not yet married, and thus did not have children, Abraham knew that God would have to do something here — specifically, if Abraham indeed offered Isaac as God had commanded, then God would have to resurrect him in order to not break his promise that Isaac would have descendants.

We read of this in Hebrews chapter 11, which says:

Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

Thus, Abraham is bold in his faith here! He has heard the clear and specific instructions of God. But also has heard the clear and specific promises of God. And he knows that there *cannot* be a conflict between the two, for God means what He says.

And oh, that we might trust God like this — that when He asks us to do something, we don't say "but, God, I don't see how that can possibly work!" Rather, let us look at Abraham's example, who trusted that God was able to perform what He had promised. He didn't need to know how, or even when. He simply took Him at His Word. *'Tis sweet to trust in Jesus!* — right?!

I love this comment from Charles Spurgeon. He said:

God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.

Charles Spurgeon

Furthermore, what do we read in the midst of this? Abraham says "the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." Here is yet more example for us, that we are to worship even when we don't understand what is going on in our lives! Even when our worship will cost us something. Indeed, our worship should always cost us something — for it is not about us — and we have to get rid of this idea that worship is something we should enjoy. Yes, it is something we *may* enjoy. But that's not the purpose of it at all. The point of worship is to offer ourselves in total praise and worship to God, regardless of the consequences, and regardless of how more (or how little) we understand our current situation. Just consider how Abraham felt here!

People are typically well meaning when they ask "how was worship today?" - but I suggest we avoid using that question altogether, for if we are to ask anyone that question, it is God! For it is Him that we are worshipping. Was *He* blessed by it? Did it bring glory to *His* name? Was it pleasing to *His* ear? That's what's important. Not whether we sang our favourite hymn or song. It's not about whether we got something out of it! It's not for us, other than to remind us of all He has done!

Now, back here in verse 6 we read:

Genesis 22:6

So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

So the Isaac, the son, carries the wood upon which he would be sacrificed — just as Jesus carried the cross upon which He would be sacrificed for you and I. And Abraham, the father, carries the fire, symbolic of judgement — and the knife, that would point toward the spear that was thrust into Jesus' side as he was on the cross.

Genesis 22:7

But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son. Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

I can't even begin to imagine what Abraham felt as Isaac asked him this. It must have been horrendous. Here was his only son he had through Sarah — a son he had waited years, and years for. And he loved him. He knew him well. He had seen him grow up into this young man. And I say man, because he wasn't a child at this point, and could well have been in his 30s — also as Jesus was when *He* was offered up.

Genesis 22:8

And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

Here, Abraham wasn't merely alluding to what God had commanded (that Isaac should be offered up), but he was *prophetically* speaking about *the* Lamb that would one day be offered in the very place they were now travelling to; the Lamb that John the Baptist spoke of when he saw Jesus and declared "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!". In fact, the phrase here is better translated God will provide *Himself* the Lamb. That is God Himself would be our sacrifice, by sending His Son — fully man and fully God — to die for us.

Indeed, we'll see in a few verses that while God provided a *ram* here in place of Isaac, He did not provide a Lamb — that was only fulfilled in Jesus being offered for us.

Verse 9...

Genesis 22:9

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

This was the specific place where God knew Jesus would be crucified, and where Goliath's head would be buried — symbolic of what we see in Genesis 3, where satan's head would be bruised.

What is even more remarkable, though, is not that this was the place where Jesus would be offered, but the attitude of Isaac. For here is a grown man, who understands how sacrifices work, and is bound by his father and laid upon the wood — and he says nothing. Oh how this mirrors how Jesus would be falsely accused, and say nothing. And how He would go to the cross without a fight, without any resistance. All because He was taking our place, to pay for our sin.

We read Jesus words as recorded in John's gospel:

John 10:17-18

"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Oh what a magnificent model of picture of Christ this chapter truly is — if we merely read it as a story, or factual account (which it is), we miss so much. Isaac here submits to the will of his father, obedient even to the point of death — prophetically speaking of what Jesus would do. We read on:

Genesis 22:10

And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

What a remarkable act of faith is shown by Abraham here. For I wonder at what point would we say... *"hang on, Lord, this isn't working out. You've not got things right here. This doesn't make sense!"*

Yet, Abraham trusted and obeyed. He had finally learned not to take matters into his own hands, but to fully trust God. To take Him at His Word. To trust and obey, no matter what.

And there was a closeness in his walk with the Lord that resulted from all this. For, have you ever noticed how it's typically those with whom you've shed tears with that you are closest to, and not those you've had a giggle or laugh with? Here, Abraham has the most unique of insights to what God felt, as He offered His Son for us. For Abraham also was at the point of offering his own son as a sacrifice for sin — so much so God considered that he had actually done it, as we'll read in a moment. And thus we can better understand through this why Abraham was called a friend of God, understanding perhaps more than we ever will, all that God did in offering Jesus for us.

Now, as Abraham picks up the knife, we read:

Genesis 22:11

But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

First, there seems urgency here as Abraham's name is called. For how close had Abraham got to killing Isaac?! It seems he was fully committed to doing so. Not half hearted. Not dithering. But all in. He had committed his whole self — all that was left was the action, for the decision was already made in his mind to obey God's command.

And that makes me wonder, are we that committed to doing what God has told us to do? Are we *that* committed to obeying His Word? Are we *that* committed to serving Him as He calls us to? We sing "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back". But have we decided? I'm not talking about our salvation here, but have we truly decided to follow Him in all we do? Or are we lingering, almost ready to turn around with a longing glance at the world as Lot's wife did?

Again, Abraham is *quick* to respond with *"Here I am"*. No animosity shown to God, for what God had asked him to do, no bitterness at what God had asked him to give up. No complaining on his part. Just total and faithful obedience to the One he knew he could trust implicitly.

And who is it that calls to Abraham? We read it is *the Angel of the LORD* — who is that? It is Jesus Himself, for in verse 1 that it was *God* who commanded Abraham to offer Isaac, and in the next verse we see this *Angel of the LORD* saying "you have not withheld your son, your only son, from *Me*" - with a capital M. And the implication of course, is that Jesus was in heaven watching this drama unfold, knowing it depicted what He would go through centuries later as He gave His life for us!

Genesis 22:12

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."

And He (again, capital letter, signifying this was Jesus) said, don't go any further. For Abraham's faith had been tested, and found sure. It was clear that Abraham was no longer considering Ishmael as his plan B. It was Isaac, or nothing. Yet he still offered him up. There was nothing left that he wouldn't give to the Lord, for it was from the Lord he had received it all anyway.

Oh what example to us! And what challenge. For aren't there a multitude of things that we would be reluctant to give up for the sake of obedience to Christ? Perhaps, even things we wouldn't be willing to give up — for we hold them too dearly. But anything we have in this life is so temporary, that in the end, it's madness to cling to temporary things when it is God whom we'll spend eternity with!

Yet cling to things we do. Our possessions have us as much as we have them. Our careers can become more important to us than showing up on a Sunday, or spending time in Christian fellowship with others. Our families, as precious as they are, can be a barrier or excuse to us serving the Lord. Our hobbies, games, sports, and love of TV, films, music, and social media can be a complete distraction from spending time with our Saviour.

Do we love God? Do we fear Him? Do we withhold anything from Him? Let us be reminded of the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

Do we fear God such (not cowering in a corner but out of respect and reverence toward Him) that we would not withhold anything from Him? We read on:

Genesis 22:13

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.

So, God provided a ram, a substitute in Isaac's place, that he need not be offered up — pointing to Jesus who was the Lamb substituted for us (the innocent for the guilty), that He would die in our place, as a sacrifice for *us*, that *our* sin may be paid in full, that we might be forgiven — *if* we accept Him as our Saviour.

And imagine the relief that Abraham must have felt! But also the relief Isaac must have felt! He never, ever would have forgotten that. And he would never have forgotten that ram that took his place, for without it he was a dead man. But wasn't that position too?! That without Jesus as the Lamb in our place, we would be dead men too.

But here, at Moriah, at Calvary, we see a ram caught by its horns, that pointed to the Lamb who would wear a crown of thorns. And so, we read in verse 14...

Genesis 22:14

And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

Abraham then, doesn't say "the Lord *has* provided". But "The Lord *will* provide". He recognised there was far more going on here than his own situation and his own son. While he didn't know the timing, he knew that God was going to do something far greater.

Genesis 22:15-17

Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

So then, God says "because you have *done* this thing — not considered doing it, but committed to doing it to the point that the decision was already made in your heart, that you would not withhold anything from Me — I will bless you". And God gives this great reiteration of the promises given before, but with supplemental detail that Israel would be a strong and mighty nation, which indeed they would become. But God doesn't stop there, for he continues by saying:

Genesis 22:18

In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

What is this all about? Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 3:

Galatians 3:16

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

That is, God is speaking to Abraham about how the whole world will be blessed through his seed — a specific person, that is Jesus Christ, who again, as John the Baptist declared, was "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!".

Indeed, just a few verses before this Paul wrote:

Galatians 3:7-8

Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

When was this gospel preached? Right here and now at Moriah, as recorded in this chapter of Genesis, almost 2000 years before Christ died for us!

But note what else God says, for He adds "because you have obeyed My voice". So consider what blessing came through the obedience of one man! And what of us? What might God do through *our* obedience? There is no further need for a Saviour, for we already have one, of course. But if we are obedient to the Lord, we might well lead others to Him! And this is the command that you and I have been give, that we should "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The question is; are *you* willing to give up anything for the cause of Christ? Am I willing? Oh how we should reflect on this in the coming days.

Imagine if you were willing to walk so closely with the Lord that you would hear Him call. That you would be so quick to say "Here I am". That you would show such trust, such willingness, at such cost to yourself, that God could use you as He used Abraham. That not only would God be glorified, not only that God would do good toward us, but that God may use us for the good of others.

Now, as this account draws to a close, we read one more verse, that it is easy to skip over:

Genesis 22:19

So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

We see Abraham returns, along with the two young men that had travelled almost as far as Moriah with him. But where was Isaac? No doubt, he did return with Abraham, but the Holy Spirit guided Moses to write this passage in such a way that Isaac, having been consigned to death, and freed from that death, is now not mentioned until when? Until we see his bride, Rebekah, coming toward him in chapter 24. And that points perfectly to how Jesus, who, having been consigned to death on the cross, and resurrected from the grave, has now returned to Heaven, and will next be seen when He comes to meet His bride, the church!

Oh, what a remarkable chapter this is! But we're not done yet. For there are a few more verses that we should read...

Genesis 22:20

Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor:

And so Abraham receives some family news, that his brother has had many children, some of whom now have children themselves. And we might think this is superfluous to requirements as far as this chapter is concerned. That after *all* we've read of Abraham's faith, and how his obedience (and Isaac's submission) paint a perfect picture of Jesus, that this, somehow, feels irrelevant. Well, it's not. For we read on:

Genesis 22:21-24

Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Terah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

While many of the individuals noted may simply be ideas for baby names at this stage, there is one that stands out — and that is Rebekah, who we'll see in the coming chapters would become Isaac's bride. And *that*, is why we not only have the context of this genealogy, but the timing of it being placed here in this chapter — for immediately after Isaac is offered up, and returns to his home, we see the birth of his bride. And that's exactly what happened with Christ, that as He was offered up, and returned to His home, so the birth of His bride, the church, took place!

Conclusion

Oh, the number of parallels or similitudes between this chapter and Jesus' sacrifice for us. I encourage you all to read through this chapter again, noting how many you can find — from Isaac being as Abraham's *only* son — as Jesus is God's only Son, to them both carrying the wood on which they would be sacrificed, to offering no struggle or even words of defence. It truly is remarkable. However, don't let it be technical exercise — but a humbling one, as you consider what Abraham and Isaac must have felt, giving some insight as to what the Father and Son must have felt as Christ was offered up in our place.

Application questions

We have much to consider as we reflect on this chapter — I urge you with all I have, to go home and think about this for some time, and ask yourself these questions at minimum:

- Are you ready and willing to respond to God's call? (Here I am!)
- Do you trust God as fully as you should? Do you trust that He will provide?
- Is there anything you would yet withhold from God? (since He withheld nothing from us)
- How thankful are you for what God did in sending Jesus to die for you? (remember, you would have been a dead man just like Isaac if it were not for the sacrifice in your place)

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