



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#38 – Abraham is Tested
Genesis 22:1-18

PICTURES NEEDED

- 38-1 Abraham and Isaac carrying wood for sacrifice
- 38-2 Isaac on the altar

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review) Why did God determine to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? How were Lot and his family rescued? What happened to Lot's wife? Why? How did God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?
- **The Big Question Review:** What does God do for the righteous? Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** 2 Peter 4:9-10
God rescues those who do what is right.

(The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment).¹⁰This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority.

Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, he and two angels had appeared to Abraham and promised him that a son would be born to him within a year. Why did Sarah laugh when she heard that promise? Sarah had laughed when she heard that promise because she was so old and past the age to have a child. She didn't believe it could happen. But just as God promised, a son was born to Abraham and Sarah and they named him Isaac, which means "he laughs." Sarah said that God had brought her laughter.

Although Abraham had another son Ishmael by Sarah's maidservant, Isaac was Abraham's son of the promise and is called his only son. When Isaac was older God determined to test Abraham's faith.

Genesis 22:1-8 (picture 38-1)

¹ *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."*

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.*

What did God tell Abraham to do? God told Abraham to take his son Isaac to a mountain and sacrifice him as a burnt offering.

Why doesn't that seem right? This test is hard for us to understand, as we know God hates human sacrifice. That is what pagan people do who don't believe in the one, true Creator God. Human life is valuable to God that's why murder is against God's law. This command doesn't make since in terms of what we know about the nature of God.

What did Abraham do in response to God's command? Although Abraham was probably confused and upset by the command, the very next day he set off to do what God had told him to do. He didn't delay or question God. He even cut the wood that would be needed for the fire.

What did Isaac ask his father? Isaac asked Abraham where the lamb was for the burnt offering.

How do you think Abraham felt when Isaac asked him that? Abraham had been trusting God his whole life. He had trusted God when he was told to leave Ur and go to a new place to live. He had trusted God for a son even though he was really old and his wife was barren. His faith was such that he was able to say to Isaac, "God will provide the lamb."

What had God promised Abraham about his descendants? Since God had promised to make his descendants as numerous as the stars, Abraham believed that God would intervene in some way. He didn't doubt God. He had a right view of God and what God was able to do.

Genesis 22:9-18 (picture 38-2)

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 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."

What did the angel of the Lord say to Abraham as he was about to slay Isaac? Abraham was told not to slay the boy. It was clear Abraham was willing to do all that God asked of him. He was fully submitted to God to the point that he didn't withhold his only son of the promise.

What did God do because of Abraham's faith? God provided a substitutionary sacrifice, a ram that Abraham could slay instead of his own son. God did this for Abraham because Abraham believed and trusted him. Abraham's actions showed that his trust in God was very real and not dependent upon his being in agreement with what God was asking.

Romans 4:3 says, "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." Abraham believed God in terms of the promise to have a son, in terms of the promise of the land and also in terms of offering his son as a sacrifice.

What does it mean to be credited with righteousness? Abraham wasn't really righteous. He was a sinner just like all of us. However, God saw him as righteous because of Abraham's faith in him.

The focus of the teaching of the Old Testament was to cause the Jews to look ahead to the Savior their heavenly Father would one day send them. God would send his only son as a

substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all people who believe in him. Like the ram God sent so Abraham didn't have to slay Isaac, Jesus is the one God has sent as the perfect lamb to take the punishment for our sin.

How do we become righteous? When we believe in what Jesus has done for us it is credited to us as righteousness, like Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. We become right in the eyes of God by believing in the sacrifice of his one and only Son. We can never be righteous on our own because we are sinners. Jesus, however, never sinned and gave himself as a perfect sacrifice to cover our sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

God demonstrates his great love for all people by sending his Son to die as a substitute for the punishment they deserve. We are made right by believing God.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** What did Abraham do when God told him to sacrifice Isaac? Why was he able to do that? Why didn't Abraham sacrifice Isaac? Why was God pleased with Abraham? What did Abraham's faith do for him?
- **Thought Questions:** What would you have done in Abraham's situation? If Abraham hadn't done what he did, what would have been the outcome? What was unusual about Abraham's faith? Do most people have that kind of faith? What keeps people from having the kind of faith Abraham had?
- **Prayer:** Thank God for the example of Abraham's faith and steadfastness. Pray that you would learn to trust God in all circumstances and stand on his promise like Abraham. Thank God that he is faithful and can be fully trusted even when you don't understand what is going on.
- **The Big Question:** **How can we become righteous like Abraham?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse:** **2 Corinthians 5:21**
We become righteous through the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Question: Who had no sin? How was he made sin for us? What did that do for us? What does it mean to be the righteousness of God?

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

- ★ **Lesson Notes:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: God told Abraham to take his son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering.

1. Abraham obeyed God and took his son to the place God said, made an altar, bound up Isaac and put him on the altar.
2. As Abraham was about to slay Isaac the angel told him to stop. There was a ram caught in the bushes to sacrifice instead.
3. Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness like our faith in Jesus' sacrifice for our sin makes us righteous.

- ★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.

- ★ **Activity Page: Acrostic Poem**

Instructions: Write an acrostic poem with the word "Righteous" that explains how we become righteous and what becoming righteous enables us to do. Examples are given below.

R – Recognize need for Jesus, repent from sin, rejoice in God

I – Increase in faith, interact with God

G – Give Jesus glory, Give God honor

H – Honor Jesus' sacrifice, help others, hope of eternal life

T – Talk with God, Take what God wants to give you, trust God completely

E – Enter a relationship with Jesus, exchange old self for new self, exalt God

O – Obey God, Open heart to Jesus

U – Understand all God has done, uncover sin

S – See yourself as you really are, satisfy self with Jesus

- ★ **Further Understanding: Bible Study Skills**

Instructions:

1. Read the whole passage below to the students as they read along in their Bibles or on the discussion notes.
2. Read the passage verse by verse and have the students explain each verse.
3. Have the students extract one important truth from the passage. This can be done as an entire class or you can break into pairs or small groups.
4. Have the students answer the additional two questions: How can you apply this truth in your life? What will be the result of applying that truth?

Hebrews 11:8-19 – Abraham demonstrates faith.

⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹²And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ¹⁴People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷By 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, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: Journal Focus - Genesis, chapters 23-25

Reading 1: Reading 1: Genesis 23 Sarah dies.

How did Abraham describe himself to the Hittites? How did he get a place to bury Sarah? What had God promised in terms of that land?

Reading 2: Genesis 24:1-27 Abraham sends his servant to find Isaac a wife.

Why did Abraham send his servant to another place to find Isaac a wife? Why didn't he send Isaac? What was the servant's prayer? How did God answer that prayer? What can you learn from that?

Reading 3: Genesis 24:28-51 The servant gets a wife for Isaac.

How did Laban refer to Abraham's servant when he offered his house for him to stay? Why did he call him that? Since Rebekah had already told her family what had happened, why did the servant repeat the story? What was Laban and Bethuel's response?

Reading 4: Genesis 24:52-66 Isaac marries Rebekah.

Why do you think Rebekah was willing to leave her home and marry a stranger? How did Isaac respond to Rebekah? Why do you think he responded that way?

Reading 5: Genesis 25:1-18 Abraham dies.

How long did Abraham live? Where was he buried? What was the relationship of the sons of Ishmael to Abraham's other descendants? Why was that?

Reading 6: Hebrews 11:8-19 Abraham demonstrates faith.

What were the things Abraham did by faith? Why was he able to live by faith in that way? What can you learn from Abraham?