

The Father of Nations:

A Study of Abraham

Lesson Ten: The testing of the father of nations—*Genesis 22*

September 13, 2020

“However, it is not just a son who is in danger; it is an entire future, a potential nation. All that Abraham had lived for is suddenly at stake.”

John I. Lawlor¹

Opening Thought: I am glad that I am not God. As a father, there have been a few times in which I have been forced to see my kids suffer, to varying extents and for various reasons. Example: A newborn Jonathan having to get daily blood tests. I remember wanting to just take him away from that nurse as he cried in pain. I also remember thinking: “I am glad that I’m not God.” If I was called upon to sacrifice my son for you, I don’t think I could do it. You would go to Hell.

I. Introduction/Review

A. Remember that God has repeatedly promised Abraham and Sarah a son.

1. This son would be their supernaturally provided heir.
2. This son would give them descendants too many to count.

B. Remember that God Himself commits to this promise without requiring anything of Abraham.

1. This is a picture of God’s sovereign grace.
 - a) Abraham believed and God credited it to Him as righteousness. Abraham was considered righteous because he believed.
 - b) God (in the form of a smoking oven and a flaming torch) passed through the pieces when they “cut” a covenant. See Genesis 15:17 and context.

C. Remember that God has (seemingly) delayed the delivery of this promise for a long time.

1. This shows us Abraham’s faith.
 - a) That he keeps waiting reverently shows us Abraham’s character. Seriously, would you? DO you?
2. This shows us Abraham’s weakness.
 - a) We see his weakness especially in how he and Sarah take matters into their own hands.
 - b) We see his weakness in how he laughs when God reaffirms His promise.

D. Remember that God finally kept His promise.

1. Isaac was born, circumcised, weaned and celebrated as the promise fulfilled.

Now, God will (once again) do the unimaginable. He will command Abraham to kill his son!

II. Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac (vv. 1-8).

A. This is a test...this is ONLY a test (v. 1).

1. We know that it is a test, but Abraham has no idea. If he did, it wouldn’t be much of a test.
2. Does God really test Abraham? I thought God didn’t tempt us? James 1:13
 - a) The same circumstances could be a “test” or a “temptation”.
 - b) Which one it is comes down to the motives of the tester.
 - c) God didn’t “tempt” Abraham so that he would fail; God “tested” Abraham so he would pass.

B. What was the test (v. 2)?

1. Offer up Isaac as a sacrifice of worship.
 - (1) Notice how Isaac is described. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

¹ John I. Lawlor, “The Test of Abraham” *Grace Theological Journal* 1 (1980).

- (a) Your son—i.e. the thing I have been promising you for decades!
- (b) Your ONLY son—that is to say, the only son that matters in terms of that promise.
- (c) Whom you LOVE—that is to say, the great delight of your heart.
- (d) Isaac—just in case we are not clear. There is no wiggle room here. THAT son!
- b) Notice what this would amount to: God’s promise would be fulfilled only to be taken right back.
- c) Notice the lack of specifics: Go to this land and make the sacrifice on one of the mountains.
 - (1) This brings us back to the beginning.
 - (2) Will Abraham, once again, follow God even if he has no idea where God is leading him?

C. Why put off until tomorrow... (vv. 3-5)?

- 1. He woke up early to obey!
- 2. He obeyed without delay! He not only woke up early, he actually did what God told him to!
- 3. He embarked on the longest 3-day journey in his life!
- 4. He told the others (the “lads”) who were with him, that he and Isaac would:
 - a) Go the rest of the way alone.
 - b) Would both return after worshipping.
 - (1) We find out later that Abraham expected a resurrection of the sacrificed son. **Heb 11:17-19**

D. Where is the Lamb for the burnt offering (vv. 6-8)?

- 1. Abraham gets ready
 - a) Abraham gathered the supplies
 - b) Abraham loaded the wood onto Isaac’s back
 - c) They walked together...alone. (notice this is mentioned twice in this passage. How somber!)
- 2. Isaac gets confused
 - a) Isaac notices that there is one key component that is missing, and it is the most important part.
 - b) Isaac asks Abraham, “Where is the lamb for sacrifice?”
- 3. Abraham answers his question: “God will see to that, my son.”
 - a) Here we see that great faith for which Abraham is so famous.

III. Now I know that you fear God (vv. 9-14)

A. Abraham [would have] went through with it!

- 1. He came to the right place, arranged everything, put Isaac on the altar, and pulled out the knife!

B. The Angel of the Lord told Abraham not to kill his son (v. 11).

- 1. Remember Who the Angel of the Lord is!

C. God provides a different sacrifice! (vv. 13-14)

- 1. Abraham finds an animal to sacrifice at the perfect time.
 - a) What do these circumstances tell us?
 - b) How does this affect the name of the place?
 - c) Why will this place continue to be significant?

IV. By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord (vv. 15-19).

A. God, once again, reaffirms the covenant.

V. Conclusion—God will see to it!

A. The complete culmination of the Abrahamic covenant will be an act of God.

- 1. This includes the sacrifice required to forgive sins.
 - a) **Galatians 4:4** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law...