

Church Year Story 36

*Catechism and Memory Verse
from the Congregation at Prayer for the Week*

BIBLE STORY: THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Genesis 22:1-19

Central Thoughts

- The Sacrifice of Isaac is a picture of the suffering and death of Christ for salvation.
- The sacrifice for sin that God Himself demanded, God Himself provided in the death of His only begotten Son.
- Abraham believed in the promise of the Lord and was declared righteous by faith alone.
- Abraham is a picture of God the Father who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.
- Isaac is a picture of the only begotten Son of God who is willingly sacrificed in our place.

Discussion Questions

NOTE: The Lord called Abram/Abraham to faith with a promise. The promise made to Abraham was the call of the Gospel that centered in the Seed of Abraham (Christ) through whom God would make of Abraham a great nation and bless the nations with the gift of salvation. This promise, first made in Genesis 12, was repeated and expanded upon in the succeeding chapters. When God called Abraham to sacrifice his son, his only son whom he loved, He was calling him to sacrifice the son whom the Lord had promised him and through whom the blessing of salvation would be extended to all the nations. Below are citations of the promise and how it unfolded leading up to the Sacrifice of Isaac:

"I will make of you a great nation... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3). "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered" (Genesis 13:16). "...one who will come from your own body shall be your heir...Look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them.... So shall your descendants be.' And [Abram] believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:5-6). "Behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram (exalted father), but your name shall be Abraham (father of a multitude); for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you" (Genesis 17:4-6). "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you..." (Genesis 17:10-11). "Then God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah (princess) shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her'" (Genesis 17:15-16).

How old was Abram when the Lord first called him to faith with the promise?

75 years old.

How old were Abraham and Sarah when Isaac was finally born?

Abraham was 100 years-old and Sarah was 90 years old. They had waited 25 years for the fulfilling of the promise in the birth of Isaac.

Is it normal for barren women to have children at such an advanced age?

No, it was a miracle. For 25 years, the Lord taught Abraham and Sarah to rely upon His promise alone and not in any strength, merit, or work of their own.

What sign of the covenant had the Lord given to Abraham and Sarah one year before Isaac was born (See Genesis 17)?

Circumcision (Note: Circumcision affects the male member responsible for impregnating his wife. Even in the sign of the promise, Abraham and Sarah were taught to rely upon the Lord alone.

What did the God call Abraham to do at the beginning of chapter 22?

"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" (verse 2).

What do God's words about Abraham's only son, whom he loved, remind us of in the New Testament?

John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."

What does Abraham's obedience to God's command teach us?

Abraham believed in God's Word.

What would later be built on Mount Moriah?

Solomon's Temple

Notice all the things that happened surrounding the preparations for the sacrifice of Isaac:

Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled a donkey, took two men with him along with Isaac, split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place. On the third day, the day we think of as the day of the resurrection, Abraham saw the place afar off and instructed his young men to stay with the donkey while he and Isaac would go to the place and worship. Afterward Abraham said they would both return to them.

What do these things remind us of in the New Testament?

All the events leading up to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Why did Abraham confess that they would return from worshipping God after the sacrifice?

He believed in the resurrection of the Son of the Promise from the dead (See Hebrews 11:17-19).

With what words did Abraham confess his faith in the Gospel in answering Isaac's question about the sacrifice?

"My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering" (verse 8)

How is Isaac, as the Son of the Promise, shown to be a willing sacrifice?

He does not fight back as he is bound to the altar.

What does the Angel of the Lord say to Abraham when He intervenes and does not allow Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?

"Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."

Why was Abraham willing to sacrifice his only son?

He believed in the promise God made to him that in Isaac all the nations of the earth would be blessed. He believed in the sacrifice and resurrection of the Son of the Promise.

What did the Lord provide for Abraham and Isaac?

A ram as a substitute.

What did Abraham confess about this place of sacrifice?

"The LORD-Will-Provide"

With what words did the Lord confirm His promise after Abraham did not withhold his son, his only son?

"In blessing I will bless you, and in 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. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:17-18).

Meditation on the Bible Story

The sacrifice of Isaac teaches us that Abraham believed in the promise of the Gospel made to him by God: "God will provide for Himself the Lamb for the burnt offering." This is precisely what God has done for us in Christ. The very sacrifice for sin which God Himself demanded, God Himself provided in offering up His Son for us upon the cross. Abraham not only believes in the promise of the death and resurrection of the Son of the Promise for the blessing of salvation by grace for all nations, but he also is a picture of God the Father who so loves the world that He gives His only begotten Son. Isaac is also a type of Christ, who would willingly suffer death upon the cross as our substitute. Mount Moriah, as the place of sacrifice, would later become the place of God's saving presence in Solomon's Temple and in the sacrifice of Jesus—the true Son of the Promise—upon the altar of the cross. Throughout his lifetime, Abraham was taught to rely upon the Gospel alone, because God's promise is true and the fountain and source of life through the death and resurrection of the Son of the Promise, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Heavenly Father, as You strengthened Abraham's faith to trust in Your promise of salvation alone in the death and resurrection of Your Son, so teach us to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from Jesus, whom You provided in our place as the only sacrifice for sin, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



The Sacrifice of Isaac
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