

# **Why God Called Abraham**

## **Part Two (Genesis 12-15)**

*The Abrahamic Covenant and What It Means for Redemption  
and Salvation*



**BIBLE STUDY APRIL 28, 2023**

# ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY

- Called by God to leave his father's (Terah) household and move to the land that God had appointed, the land of Canaan. Abram's wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, traveled with him. At that time, Abram lived in Haran. Previously, Terah and his family lived in Ur of the Chaldees (Mesopotamia). Abram was 75 when he left for Canaan.
- From Haran, Abram moved to Damascus and then to Shechem in Canaan. After that, he moved to Bethel and Ai. While he was there, a famine came on the land, and Abram moved his household to Egypt. This causes problems for Abram, Sarai, and Pharaoh (\*see previous lesson). Abram and Lot returned to Bethel, where there was competition and strife between their herdsmen over space for their herds. Lot and Abram separated.
- After that, Abram moved to Hebron in Mamre. When Lot was kidnapped, Abram pursued his abductors to the land at Dan and then to Hobah, where they freed the captives. Abram moved through Salem (which would become Jerusalem) on his return, where he encountered the priest-king Melchizedek. Abram finally returned to Hebron. Shortly after, God changed Abram's name to Abraham. In Hebron, Abraham's son, Ishmael was born to Hagar.
- Abraham moved to Gerar in the land of the Philistines. This again caused problems between Abraham, Sarah, and the Philistine king Abimelech, with whom Abraham eventually made a covenant of peace (\*see previous lesson). Abraham moved to Beersheba, where his son, Isaac, was born to Sarah. Hagar and Ishmael fled the household a short time later. Abraham was commanded to take Isaac and sacrifice him on Mount Moriah in Salem. Because Abraham was willing to obey, God spared Isaac. They returned to Beersheba. Eventually, Sarah and Abraham were both buried in a cave at Machpelah.
- Wherever Abraham moved, he lived in a tent and built an altar. The tent marked him as a pilgrim, a man set apart from the world by God. The altar was an expression of his worship of the one true God, and he worshipped in the site of all pagan people who lived around him. To some (like Melchizedek), Abraham was a model of faith and righteous obedience of God, a neighbor. However, he was still human and made mis-steps. To people like Pharaoh and Abimelech, Abraham's deceptions brought them trouble and suffering. It's true that God's people do sometime slip into sin (as we see with Noah, Moses, David, and Solomon). Fortunately, like Abraham, we have the opportunity to repent and turn back to God and receive His righteousness and forgiveness when our own righteousness falls short. **Our character, testimony, ministry, and our journey should always reflect God.**



# Abram and Lot: A Study of Contrasts

- Genesis 13 finds Abram and his family back in Canaan but facing a dilemma. As Abram and Lot both grew in wealth, the land could no longer support both their households. This was leading to quarreling between their respective herdsman. Whenever people of God descend into quarreling and infighting (especially in view of unbelievers like the pagans who knew Abram and Lot), it casts a poor light on us and does not represent our holy Father well.
- Abram behaved as a child of God in this situation. Though he had the right of first choice of land, Abram offered Lot the choice of land in Canaan. Lot's eyes were on the choice fields and fertile valleys of the lands near Sodom and Gomorrah. He began to move away from God towards sin. First he settled outside of Sodom, then he eventually settled inside the city. The problem with coveting is that it makes us vulnerable to sin.
- There is some theological debate as to whether allowing his nephew Lot to accompany him (see Genesis 12:1) meant that Abram had not fully left his father's household as God commanded. God's command does not specify that Abram is to take no members of the household with him. Certainly, God did not expect Abram to leave his wife, Sarai, behind. Abram also took servants with him. As Lot's presence being an issue is not specifically stated in the Bible, we should not draw that conclusion. Lot's presence does not preclude the Lord from first speaking of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12.
- Likewise, the fact that God next speaks of the covenant *after* Lot and Abram separate (Genesis 13) does not necessarily indicate God's disapproval of Lot. By rights as elder and head of the household, Abram should have had the first choice of land for his own herds. Instead, he humbly submitted his rights so that Lot could choose. It was a gesture of humility, generosity, selflessness. Abram also remained in the land where God had planted him. That could just as easily be the reason why God again speaks blessings to Abram after Lot's departure.



# Abram and Lot: A Study of Contrasts

- If Abram is our model of a man who walks in obedience to God with his eyes on the Lord, Lot's story is a warning of how the things of this world can distract us from the path of fellowship with the Lord. Abram's eyes remained on God. "Abram the Hebrew" still lived in his tent, worshipped at his altars, and lived separated from (but not indifferent to) the world.
- Lot clearly knows of the Lord through Abram (we see Lot greet and serve the angels in Sodom and risk even his daughters to protect the angels from the wicked men of the city). Unfortunately, once he establishes himself in worldly ways, he is unable to break from them, unable to extricate himself from the lure of Sodom and Gomorrah and return to God. The result is repeated disaster. Lot's eyes were on the world. He walked by sight rather than by faith. He's never said to have built an altar to the Lord. There is no information on the extent to which he worshipped God even though Abraham had modeled faith and worship to his household.
- First, Lot is kidnapped when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah go to war with rival nations. Abram is forced to rescue Lot.
- Second, Lot is still residing in Sodom when the city (along with Gomorrah) is judged and destroyed by God for the wickedness of its people. The Bible states that God sent three angels to remove Lot and his family from Sodom before the disaster. **This was done out of God's love for Abram.** To the last moment, Lot resists leaving Sodom and escaping disaster. He is unable to convince his future son-in-laws to escape. His wife looks back during the flight (directly against the angels' orders) and is turned to salt. Lot loses everything except his two daughters. He is last seen hiding in the mountains. Through incest with his daughters, Lot would become the patriarch of the Ammonites and the Moabites, who would persecute Israel.
- It is only Abram's love and intercession with God that repeatedly saves Lot's life. Lot's story reminds us to keep our eyes on God.



# ***Two times Abraham saved Lot (and how it relates to redemption versus worldliness)***

- **Genesis 16:** When the kings of Jordan (including King Bera of Sodom and King Birsha of Gomorrah) rebelled against the leadership of King Chedorlaomer of Elam, the Jordanian kings were defeated and their citizens taken prisoner, including Lot (who was now living in Sodom). Abram gathered all the men of the household and allied with Bera and the other kings to free the captives and rescue Lot. God blessed Abram with victory.
- Alas, instead of seeing his capture as an indication from God to repent and move away from the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot returned to Sodom.
- When God speaks to Abram after his servant turns down rewards for this battle, God reveals Himself as Abram's "shield" and "exceedingly great reward".
- King Bera offered Abram the spoils of the victory in exchange for the people Abram had rescued. Abram would take no spoils, less the glory for the victory be given to him rather than to God.
- It is important to understand that 1) Abram probably offered the people their freedom after their rescue, a choice of whether to return to Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities or to go elsewhere. Those who returned would perish in the coming judgement of those wicked cities. In a sense, this rescue should have shone God's light for all the captives and the kings of the Jordan plains. We shall never know who was saved by Abram's example.
- Melchizedek (both a king and a priest, his name means "king of righteousness" recognized Abram as a man of God. He symbolically offered Abram bread and wine (which would later become symbolic of the blood and flesh of Jesus Christ. See Hebrews 7.). Symbolically, then, receiving Melchizedek was receiving Jesus.
- Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of the spoils of the victory, which was the origin of "tithing" in Scripture ("tithing" means "ten"). Melchizedek rightly gave God credit for Abram's victory and blessed Abram in the name of God Most High. Tithing is an act of love towards God, acknowledging His goodness and provision.



# ***Two times Abram/Abraham saved Lot (and how it relates to redemption versus worldliness)***

- Lot was endangered when the time came for God to exercise divine judgement over Sodom and Gomorrah.
- His three angels appear first to Abram (now Abraham), who humbly serves them. These three visitors are actually called Jehovah (called “they” but named Jehovah, possibly an indication that this is the Trinity visiting in person). What is notable when these three visitors arrive at Abram’s tent is that Abraham rushes to greet them, humbly ministers to them by feeding them and having their feet washed (a gesture expected of hosts). Not just feeding them, Abram sacrifices the best young bull and has bread made of the finest flour). When we serve the Lord, we want to do so without delay and to give Him our very best!
- Jehovah speaks of the impending birth of Sarai’s (now Sarah) child. Her response? She laughs in disbelief. She denies it, but there is no point in lying to an all-knowing God. Nevertheless, He promises that she will have a child within the year because nothing is impossible with God. God states that He has come to know Abraham so that Abraham will keep God’s commands and teach his sons and household to do the same.
- God also pronounces judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham attempts to intercede on behalf of anyone in the city who might still be righteous (including Lot). It was Abraham’s obedience and knowledge of God, his personal relationship with God, and his compassion that made him an intercessor. Though God promises if even ten righteous people are found, He will spare the cities, we know that no righteous people were found.

- **Missed opportunities in salvation.**

Lot clearly knew of God. As soon as he sees the three men, he bows in recognition that they are holy visitors. Like Abram, he offers them shelter and care, including washing their feet. He nearly sacrifices his daughters to protect the visitors. In the end, God personally (and literally) dragged Lot, his wife, and their two daughters out of the city before its destruction.

By Lot’s position at the gate of the city, we see that he was a man of some authority in Sodom. Lot interceded to protect the three visitors from the wicked intentions of the citizens of Sodom. However, we can’t say for certain if Lot witnessed for the Lord among these cities or tried to intercede for them as Abraham tried. We can’t say if they would have listened to such witnessing. It is painful to ponder is that other people in Sodom and Gomorrah might have lost their opportunity to find salvation because one who knew of the Lord did not witness for Him.

What is clear is this: Wherever God plants us, there is opportunity. There is the chance to be the image, the hands, the feet, and the voice for God to those around us. There is the chance to shine His light that others can be drawn to salvation.

The Bible does tell us that God’s final judgement is coming in the future, this time to every city. It could be that our lives among others, our outreach to others, and sharing our faith with others presents their only chance to hear of Jesus Christ and receive salvation. As surely as if we saw a person drowning or about to step in front of a car, such is the urgency with which we should share our hope with others before they are lost like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. We are not responsible if they refuse the Lord. We are commissioned to share the Word and model the Lord’s way.



# GOD'S PREVIOUS COVENANTS

Despite the sin and fall of mankind, and even with man's repeated backsliding into corruption and wickedness, God has compassion and mercy for man. Remember that God is UNCHANGING, which means that His mercy and compassion for us has not changed from the moment of humankind's creation and it will never end.

The covenants between God and mankind are evidence of God's great love and compassion for His creation. He knew that mankind could not hope to attain true righteousness or holiness by our own efforts, thus we cannot be justified before the Lord or earn our own salvation. The only way is for the Lord to impart HIS righteousness to us as a reward for our FAITH and BELIEF. The only way the wages of sin (which is death) could be repaid would be by a perfect sacrifice. Again, no man could hope to live a perfect life, so it would fall to the Lord to provide a way. Thus, we see the Lord carefully directing history towards the arrival of the Messiah, the one who would live the perfect life, be the perfect sacrifice for sin, and make possible our salvation.

## ▪ The Adamic/Edenic Covenant

- Part one was the "Edenic Covenant" in Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:16-17 (which relates to Adam and Eve's innocence). This covenant states that mankind is made in God's image. Mankind has dominion over the animal kingdom (again, not a mandate to dominate without regard but to lovingly care for creation and animals as trusted caretakers). The covenant instructs mankind to reproduce and fill the earth. Mankind is to be vegetarian (for now). Mankind is forbidden to eat of the Tree of Life or the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- Part two was the "Adamic Covenant" in Genesis 3:16-19 (following Eve and Adam's sin). This covenant states there is enmity between Satan and Eve and Eve's descendants. As a result, there will be pain in childbirth, marital strife, the ground is cursed and will resist cultivation with thorns and thistles, survival will be a struggle, and death is now the inescapable conclusion of all things. BUT there will be a descendant of Eve (Christ the Messiah) who will crush the head of the serpent (Satan).

## ▪ The Noahic Covenant

- (Genesis 9:8-17) Is a covenant with Noah and all living creatures. God promises never to send a worldwide flood again as divine judgement for sin. God sets a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of this covenant. At this point in history, God now allows man to hunt animals for food. He has put the fear of man into animals. God made the first animal sacrifice when He made clothing for Adam and Eve out of animals skins. This foreshadows the roll that blood sacrifices will play in Israel and points towards the ultimate sacrifice of Christ the Messiah as the fulfillment of all God's covenants with mankind.



- **GENESIS 12:1-7:** God calls upon Abram to leave his father's house and go to the land that the Lord would show him. Abram's father, Terah, had just passed away. His household had been settled in Haran. Abram took his wife, Sarai, and his nephew Lot and went to the land that God appointed, which was Canaan.
- **When Abram arrives there, God makes promises:**
  - God will make a great nation of Abram
  - God will bless Abram and make a blessing of Abram
  - God will make Abram's name great
  - God will bless those who bless Abram
  - God will curse those who curse Abram
  - All families of the ground (the world) will be blessed through Abram.
- You will notice evidence of God keeping these promises throughout Abram's story. When Sarai is taken by the Pharaoh and by King Bera, the Lord curses their households until Sarai is restored to Abram. While Lot travels with Abram, he is blessed with wealth and livestock. When Abram leads his household into battle along the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah to rescue Lot, God gives Abram victory and the kings receive great spoils. Though Ishmael is not the covenant son, God still blesses him and makes a nation of him because he is the child of Abram.
- We noted that Abram's travels were marked by the tent that was his dwelling (marking him as set apart from the world by God) and the altars that Abram built (marking him as a man of faith in the one true God). When God makes these promises, Abram responds by building an altar and worshipping. Abram believes God, and God imparts His own righteousness to Abram.

# GOD REVEALS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Building upon His promises to Adam, Eve, and Noah, God is now beginning to reveal the specific details of His redemptive plan for mankind.

The key elements of the Abrahamic Covenant are Abraham's name, a promised land, and Abraham's descendants. What it becomes is the foundation of a holy nation that would be set apart for God's purposes. It is the continuation of the line of the Messiah, which began with Adam, continued through Noah and Shem, and will now continue through Abraham and his son with Sarah. It is the family into which all future believers from every nation would be adopted. It's the foundation of God's family and the future Kingdom of Christ.





- **GENESIS 13:5:** Lot and Abram have gone their separate ways. God appears to Abram again and reiterates His covenant promises:
  - **All the land of Canaan will be given to Abram and to his offspring.**
  - **Abram's offspring will be numerous as the grains of sand on the ground.**
- Again, Abram responds by believing God and worshipping God by building another altar.

## GOD REVEALS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Family dynamics: Some theologians speculate that Abram had not fully obeyed God's orders to leave his father's household because Abram allowed Lot to accompany him to Canaan. They point to this chapter as proof, since the Lord appears to Abram *after* he separates from Lot.

What you will notice, however, is that God's conversations with Abram tend to happen after Abram has performed an act of obedience or integrity (representing God's ways). God speaks *after* Abram obeys and leaves his father's house. God speaks *after* Abram humbly gives Lot the choice of land. God speaks *after* Abram refuses to take war spoils from the King of Sodom. God speaks *after* Abram personally serves His messengers a meal. God speaks *after* Abraham proves willing to sacrifice Isaac.



# GOD REVEALS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

- **GENESIS 15:4-17:** God begins to illuminate the heart of the Abrahamic Covenant in this section. God is responding to Abram's concerns that he and Sarai are very advanced in age and still have no child to inherit their wealth. He is concerned that his servant will be his heir. God is setting Abram's mind at ease by revealing more of His plans:
  - **Abram will have a blood son as an heir; his servant will not inherit Abram's wealth**
  - **Abram's offspring would be numerous as the stars in the sky**
  - **His offspring would be enslaved in a foreign land for 400 years, but then they would leave that land with many goods (wealth)**
  - **Abram's offspring would return to Canaan in the 4<sup>th</sup> generation**
  - **God would give the land of Canaan to Abram's offspring**
- God, of course, is revealing the events of the Book of Exodus. God specifically states that one reason for the lengthy enslavement of Abram's descendants is that "the error of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure". Egypt, of course, is a polytheistic nation where even their Pharaoh is worshipped as a living god. Because of his perceived deity, Pharaoh resists God's commands to release the Hebrew slaves (Abram's offspring). God humbles Pharaoh and proves His true sovereignty in the end, and Abram's descendants indeed return to Canaan.

The blood covenant was an unbreakable oath. Animals were sacrificed and cut in two halves. The people making the oath would walk together between the two pieces. In doing so, they take on the responsibility to fulfill the oath under penalty of death.

In the Abrahamic Covenant, Abram sacrifices animals and divides them in half. HOWEVER, it is only God who passes between the two halves. This means that God is taking ALL responsibility for fulfilling the promises of this covenant and the penalty of death if the covenant is broken. Fortunately, we know that God is holy, righteous, just, and truthful. His covenant remains unbroken to this day.



- **GENESIS 17:** It had been 13 years since Abram last heard from God. God reveals Himself here as “El Shaddai” (God Almighty). Abram is 99 years old when God again appears to elaborate on the Abrahamic Covenant. He is raising a son, Ishmael, born through his Egyptian slave, Hagar (we will discuss this momentarily). God is about to spring some BIG family news on Abram.
  - **God will multiply Abram very much. He will be the father of many nations.**
  - **Because of this, Abram (father on high) will now be called “Abraham” (father of a multitude) and Sarai (contentious) will now be called Sarah (princess).**
  - **God again states that He has an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his offspring. BUT....**
  - **This covenant is going to be fulfilled through SARAH’S son, Isaac, and his descendants.**
  - **Circumcision will be the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham’s descendants. Every male (beginning with those in Abraham’s household) born to his family or purchased into his family must be circumcised or they will be cut off from the promises of the covenant.**
  - **Though Ishmael will not be the son of the covenant, because he is Abraham’s son, Ishmael would still be blessed. He would become a chieftain and a father of a great nation.**
- Why did God wait until Abraham and his wife were “as good as dead” in their nineties before promising them a biological son? Remember that God took full responsibility for fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant through His great power. As one proof of His ability to do all that He has promised, God causes Sarah to conceive a child even though she is well past child-bearing years.

# GOD REVEALS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

How will all peoples of the ground be blessed through Abraham?

As we have seen, the line of the Messiah began with Eve, continued through Seth and through Shem. Abraham is the next in the Messianic line, and that line will continue through his own off-spring. His descendants will become the covenant people of Israel, God’s special possession. They will be given a special Law detailing God’s expectations of His people. This Law is meant to help them live in holiness until the arrival of the Messiah, who will ultimately bring them justification, salvation, and redemption so that they may become citizens of the eternal kingdom.

What about the Gentiles (those people not of Israel)? Through faith in Christ, salvation becomes available to them. When the Christian believes in Christ as Messiah, he or she becomes “adopted” into the family of Israel, become children of Abraham, and receive the hope of salvation as well. And it all begins right here, with the promise of a child for Abram and Sarai.



# *Sarai & Hagar & Isaac & Ishmael...*

The story of Sarai and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, illustrate the necessity faith, patience, trust, and obedience as part of our relationship with God.

When God purposes us for a particular ministry (when we feel His call), it is important that we remember God's purposes must be fulfilled in HIS WAY, according to HIS TIMING by HIS METHOD. Too often, we sense the call of God, but when events don't unfold as we anticipate, when the results aren't what we expect, when things just don't seem to be happening, we are tempted to take matters into our own hands. If we are going to serve God, we have to trust Him and do it on God's terms.

In Genesis 16, we see that Sarai has become frustrated and impatient. God has promised Abram that he will have a son to be heir of Abram's household, but they are still without child years later. Sarai takes matters into her own hands by giving her Egyptian servant, Hagar, to Abram and insisting that he produce a child with Hagar so that Sarai might have a son. Abram should insist that they wait on God and trust Him, but he yields his authority and submits to Sarai's will.

The result brings pain and sorrow to their household. Pregnant Hagar begins to despise Sarai, who in turn mistreats Hagar until the servant flees the household. It is only the appearance and reassurance of God's angel that compels Hagar to return and give birth to Ishmael. Though Abram loves Ishmael very much, the tension remains between Sarai, Hagar, and Ishmael.

When Abraham and Sarah are celebrating Isaac, Sarah catches Ishmael mocking the child and demands that Hagar and Ishmael are both cast from Abraham's household. Again, Abraham submits to her will. Again, God's angel appears to Hagar and reassures her that God will be with Ishmael. Still, Abraham's heart is broken for his older son and the tension between Ishmael and Isaac would exist between their descendants to this very day. Ishmael's descendants would persecute the nation of Israel until the end of days with the Second Coming of Christ.

**“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord” – Psalm 27:14**



# *Sarai & Hagar & Isaac & Ishmael...*

The heart of Sarai's mistake was trying to accomplish God's purposes through worldly (human) means. God alone could fulfill the promises for the covenant child. As we see, part of the delay was so that the birth of Isaac would bring God glory and demonstrate His power to fulfill every promise. Sarai was more concerned with her own desires than for God's glory.

This is a danger against which every believer must guard. In previous lesson, we saw that **COMPROMISE** is a favorite weapon of Satan to lure us into disaster. Compromise led Eve and Adam to eat from the forbidden tree. If it's leading to our own glory instead of God's, if it's an action born of our own pride, if it seems good to us but we know God has told us to do otherwise, **WATCH OUT**. Even the apostle Paul himself struggled when personal desires and worldly ways overrode his intentions to follow God's way:

*"<sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.<sup>[a]</sup> For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it."* (Romans 7:15-20)

The best thing you can do when you stumble into this trap and experience the consequences is go to the Lord in prayer and repentance and submit to His will. It's not always easy to be patient like Abram and Sarai or to obey when God sends you into situations such as when He commands Hagar to return to Sarai and submit to her will. [*\*It should be noted that Hagar was in God's will and was promised that He would care for her and her child. Certainly, if you are in a situation where you feel abused, threatened, or otherwise uncomfortable, go to your pastor or congregation leaders and seek counsel and help. It's possible that the reason for your uncomfortable situation is that you are not in God's will at all and have stumbled into worldly peril. Do not remain in such circumstances.\**]

Just remember that God has the big picture. He knows your future; He has a purpose for you. *Trust Him to work all things for your good.*



# THE SONS OF ABRAHAM

## ISHMAEL

- The first baby in the Bible to be named before his birth (Isaac was second).
- Represents the believer's first birth into the flesh, which is subject to death.
- Born through man attempting to fulfill God's will through human means.
- Born to a slave (representing how we are enslaved by our sinful nature).
- Brought dissension into Abraham's house.
- God often passed over the firstborn children in favor of the second or even third child. He rejected Cain and chose Abel (Genesis 4). He chose Jacob instead of Esau (Genesis 25) and Ephraim instead of Manasseh (Genesis 48).

## ISAAC

- Means "He Laughs" because he brought joy to Abraham's house. This represents Jesus' teaching that joy results when lost sinners are found by the Lord.
- Born to a free woman (again representing freedom in Christ)
- Born into the Spirit by the divine power of God. He represents the "second birth" that future believers would receive through faith in Christ the Messiah.
- The covenant heir through whom the lineage of the Messiah would continue.
- Experienced persecution, just as we are told as children of God to expect troubles in this world. God was with him, as God will be with us.



# God reveals the Abrahamic Covenant

Abraham is tested many times in his journey with God. Sometimes he passed (as when he obeyed God's orders and acted with humility and integrity) and sometimes he failed (with the Pharaoh, the Philistine King, with Hagar).

We are to expect temptations and trials in our walk with God. Remember that God will not allow us to be tested and will be there when we are not strong enough to endure on our own.

When Abraham faces his greatest test—the command to sacrifice Isaac after waiting so long for the birth of the covenant son—he still holds on to God's promises and places all faith and trust in the Lord. As the Bible teaches: Abraham believed the Lord and it was counted to him as righteousness. As we see here, after Abraham obeys, God once again affirms the Abrahamic Covenant.

- *“Some time later God tested Abraham; he called to him, “Abraham!” And Abraham answered, “Yes, here I am!”<sup>2</sup> “Take your son,” God said, “your only son, Isaac, whom you love so much, and go to the land of Moriah. There on a mountain that I will show you, offer him as a sacrifice to me.”<sup>3</sup> Early the next morning Abraham cut some wood for the sacrifice, loaded his donkey, and took Isaac and two servants with him.” (Genesis 22:1-3)*
- *“The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time,<sup>16</sup> “I make a vow by my own name—the LORD is speaking—that I will richly bless you. Because you did this and did not keep back your only son from me,<sup>17</sup> I promise that I will give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand along the seashore. Your descendants will conquer their enemies.<sup>18</sup> All the nations will ask me to bless them as I have blessed your descendants—all because you obeyed my command.”<sup>19</sup> Abraham went back to his servants, and they went together to Beersheba, where Abraham settled.” (Genesis 22:15-19)*



- Abraham believed God without needing the details of God's plans. He held on to God's promises and trusted in God's provision.
- Isaac is a Biblical type, a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ.
  - Both were born by the power of God.
  - Abraham loved Isaac and God the Father loved Christ the Son.
  - Neither God nor Abraham spared their sons. In the case of Jesus, obviously a ram could not take His place on the altar of sacrifice. Jesus' was the only blood that could permanently take away man's sins.
  - Both endured persecution (in Isaac's case, it came from his brother, Ishmael)
  - Both were forsaken by the father. In Jesus' case, He had to experience suffering and death for God's judgement so that mankind could be freed from sin. In Isaac's case, the boy still had to fulfill his place in preserving the Messianic line, which meant he would have a child of his own one day. God COULD have resurrected Isaac if Abraham had sacrificed the boy. It was not the Lord's power being tested, however, it was Abraham's faith in the Lord. Isaac's "death" was symbolic. Being delivered from the altar of sacrifice by the mercy of God foreshadows Jesus being resurrected after his own sacrifice on the cross.
  - Interesting footnote: The Jerusalem temple would one day be built on Mount Moriah. Jesus would walk on the same mountain where Abraham had nearly sacrificed Isaac.

# Mount Moriah and Isaac

We understand what the command to sacrifice Isaac meant to his father. What does it teach us about Isaac's role in covenant history?





# A last note...

- *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup> These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. – 1 Peter 1:3-9*



# References for this lesson:

- **“BE OBEDIENT: LEARNING THE SECRET OF LIVING BY FAITH” by Warren W. Wiersi; DavidCook Publishing, 1991**

