

## Abraham and Isaac, a Faith Test

### Introduction:

This story is about God testing Abraham's faith and his love for God. By this time Isaac was an older boy.

### Story:

God told Abraham to take his *only son* (This phrase in Hebrew means "a precious life". Isaac's birth had been miraculous. He was Abraham's only son by Sarah; the child God promised would inherit all of God's blessings. ) and go to the land of Moriah. God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a \*burnt offering on the mountain He pointed out to Abraham.

*\*A burnt offering belonged to God and no one else. Abraham would have understood this direction to mean killing Isaac and burning his body on an altar like a sheep or a cow or an ox was offered to God.*

Abraham split the wood for the offering. Early the next morning he woke up two of his servants and Isaac to go with him to Moriah.

After traveling three days, he saw the place at a distance. He told his servants to wait there with the donkeys while he and Isaac went to the place to worship. He said they'd return to the servants afterwards.

Then Abraham gave Isaac the bundle of wood to carry while he carried a flint to start the fire and a knife. Isaac questioned his dad about why they had the wood, flint, and knife but no sheep for the offering. Abraham replied that God would provide a sheep for the offering.

When they arrived at the spot God had directed Abraham to, Abraham built an altar. Then he laid the wood on top and placed Isaac bound with ropes on top of the wood. Abraham took his knife and prepared to kill Isaac.

An angel cried out, "Abraham! Abraham!" Abraham stopped to listen. The angel continued, "Don't kill your son! Don't touch him! Now I know that you fear God because you didn't hold back anything, not even your only son from me."

Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So he took it and offered it up to God on the altar instead of Isaac.

He named the place Yahweh Yireh or The Lord Will Provide because God provided the ram for the offering.

Then the angel of God called out to Abraham a second time: **"I swear—GOD's sure word!—because you have gone through with this, and have not refused to give me your son, your dear, dear son, I'll bless you—oh, how I'll bless you! And I'll make sure that your children flourish—like stars in the sky! like sand on the beaches! And your descendants will defeat their enemies. All nations on Earth will find themselves blessed through your descendants because you obeyed me."**(Genesis 22:15-18)

Then Abraham and Isaac returned down the mountain to where the servants and donkeys were waiting.

### **Summary:**

**In this story God tested Abraham's faith and obedience. He also tested his love for or devotion to God. Would Abraham truly put God first in his life even if it meant sacrificing his special son, Isaac? Abraham passed the test.**

**If you look at what Abraham said along the way, you can see glimpses of his faith. When he left his servants, he said that both he and Isaac would return. When Isaac questioned him, he said that God would provide a sheep for the sacrifice (which is exactly what God did).**

**This is what Hebrews 11:17-19 says about this story: "By faith, Abraham, at the time of testing, offered Isaac back to God. Acting in faith, he was as ready to return the promised son, his only son, as he had been to receive him—and this after he had already been told, 'Your descendants shall come from Isaac.' Abraham figured that if God wanted to, he could raise the dead. In a sense, that's what happened when he received Isaac back, alive from off the altar."**

**God offered His Only SON in our place on the cross as a once and for all sacrifice for our sins. God did what he did not require Abraham to do. Can you imagine how painful and hard that must have been for God? Yet He did it because He loved us so much. Just like Abraham believed God could resurrect Isaac if He had to in order to fulfill His promise to him, God resurrected Jesus. He conquered death, hell, and the grave for us so that we can live an eternal life with God.**

**James 2:21 speaks about this incident also. Here it is saying that we must act on our faith like Abraham did. Let's read it: "Wasn't our**

**ancestor Abraham ‘made right with God by works’ when he placed his son Isaac on the sacrificial altar? Isn't it obvious that faith and works are yoked partners, that faith expresses itself in works? That the works are ‘works of faith’? The full meaning of ‘believe’ in the Scripture sentence, ‘Abraham believed God and was set right with God,’ includes his action. It's that mesh of believing and acting that got Abraham named ‘God's friend’. Is it not evident that a person is made right with God not by a barren faith but by faith fruitful in works?”**

**So there are 3 key points to this message. The first is have you believed God sent His only Son Jesus to die for your sins, resurrecting him from the dead, conquering death, hell and the grave so that you can spend the rest of eternity with God? If not, let's pray together now.**

**Secondly, if you do have faith in God, it could be tested like Abraham's faith was. When faith is tested we have to stand firm on God's promises and believe God will keep His promises and bring them to pass. Abraham had learned this lesson well when God promised him Isaac would be born to him and Sarah. He saw how supernaturally God fulfilled that promise. It convinced him that God would go to any lengths, even resurrecting Isaac from the dead to keep His promises.**

**Thirdly, sometimes we have to demonstrate our faith by our actions. Can you think of a situation where you have done that or where you need to do that?**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What does the phrase “only son” mean in Hebrew?
2. What did it mean to sacrifice a burnt offering to God?
3. Why do you think Abraham said that he and Isaac would be back to his servants?
4. What did Abraham tell Isaac when he asked where the sheep for the sacrifice was?
5. Who stopped Abraham from killing Isaac?
6. Why did the angel stop Abraham from killing Isaac? What did the angel say Abraham had proved by his actions?
7. What did Abraham name the place where the altar was? Why?

8. Later, God renewed the covenant with Abraham. What did God promise him? (Hint: Look at Genesis 22:15-18 above.)

9. Compare what Abraham was going to do with Isaac on Mt. Moriah to what God did in offering up Jesus on the cross. Look at John 3:16 for help.

10. Galatians 3:7, 8 tells us this about exercising our faith: **“Is it not obvious to you that persons who put their trust in Christ (not persons who put their trust in the law!) are like Abraham: children of faith? It was all laid out beforehand in Scripture that God would set things right with non-Jews by faith. Scripture anticipated this in the promise to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed in you."** What does this scripture mean? How are all nations blessed through Abraham?