

Character Study: Abraham

Part 7 – Abraham’s Big Test

Genesis 21-22

What’s happening?

- The Lord fulfilled His promise to Abraham when Abraham was 100 years old. Sarah bore a son just as God had said she would. The child was named Isaac. (21:1-7)
- At a large banquet hosted by Abraham, Ishmael was seen mocking Isaac. Sarah became upset and had Abraham make Hagar and her son move away. God assured His protection on Ishmael, but reminded Abraham that Isaac was the son by which the covenant would be fulfilled. Hagar and Ishmael settled in the Wilderness of Paran. (21:8-21)
- After some time passed, God tested Abraham by telling him to take his beloved son up into the mountains of Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering. Following in obedience, Abraham took Isaac to the mountains. When Isaac asked about the sacrifice, Abraham simply told him that God would provide it. (22:1-8)
- Abraham prepared the altar, bound his son, and took his knife in order to slay him. Just then, the Angel of the Lord told him not to touch his son, for Abraham had clearly shown a genuine fear of God. Abraham found a ram caught in a thicket, and offered the ram instead of his son. He named that place “The Lord Will Provide.” (22:9-18)

What’s God doing?

- > God gave Abraham his promised son 25 years after establishing the covenant. The name Isaac means “laugh,” and though Sarah laughed in doubt before, she now laughed with joy.
- > God had promised to fulfill certain things through Isaac, yet He was telling Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. God tested Abraham to see if he would trust Him even when His reasons were not always clear.

What’s to learn?

- A true test always requires a sacrifice. Abraham passed his test because nothing was more valuable to him than God Himself. Are there things you hold close to your heart that keep you from fully living for God?
- It is one thing to be obedient to God when we need something; it is another to continue in obedience after God has given it to us. Obeying God during the good times shows our desire to follow God is sincere.