



LESSON 12

God tests Abraham

GENESIS 22:1-19



Faith is proven by obedience.



“Abraham said, ‘God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.’ So they went both of them together” (Gen 22:8).

Supporting Truths

1. God tests faith by requiring obedience even when it is very hard.
2. Faith is proven by obedience.
3. God provides a substitute sacrifice to save those who truly trust Him.
4. God tests faith because He is jealous: we must love Him more than anything.
5. God gives Jesus as the final substitute sacrifice for all who believe.

Objectives

1. Describe how Abraham obeyed God’s command.
2. Explain what Abraham believed as he chose to obey.
3. Describe how God provided a substitute sacrifice in the place of Isaac.
4. Explain how God’s command tested what Abraham loved most.
5. Explain how the event and the location point toward Jesus as the final substitute sacrifice.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God tests Abraham • Genesis 22:1–19



Lesson Summary

God tested Abraham's faith by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son whom he loved. Abraham trusted God, and he proved this by obeying, until God stopped him at the last minute. In response to Abraham's faith, God provided a substitute sacrifice and confirmed His promise that Abraham's seed would bless all nations.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God tested Abraham's faith and obedience by commanding him to offer his beloved son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. God spared Isaac by providing a substitute ram, which is a symbol of Jesus, the Lamb of God who died for all nations. Through Abraham's greater Son, Jesus Christ, God has provided a substitute for all who follow Abraham's example of faithful obedience.

LAST WEEK



God sends baby Isaac
Genesis 21:1–14

THIS WEEK



God tests Abraham
Genesis 22:1–19

NEXT WEEK



God chooses Jacob
over Esau
Genesis 25:21–24;
27:1–28:5

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

Faith is proven by obedience.

The promised son, Isaac, had finally been born. For years Abraham and Sarah had waited. God had worked with them in their weakness, promising over and over that the great nation would come through Sarah's son Isaac, not through Ishmael or anyone else. In Genesis 21, Isaac was born, and Abraham and Sarah rejoiced and grew strong in their faith in God. Now, after God had strengthened Abraham's faith and given him time to mature, God brought the most difficult test to Abraham to prove that his faith was real.



THINK ABOUT IT

The testing of Abraham's faith produced endurance (Jas 1:3)

God commanded Abraham to give up what he loved most (22:1-2)

In Genesis 12:1 God commanded Abraham to "go". God told Abraham to leave his country, relatives,

and his father's home and move to the land that He would reveal to him. In Genesis 22:2 God again told Abraham to "go", using exactly the same wording found in Genesis 12:1. This time God told Abraham to go to the land of Moriah to offer his beloved son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. God tested Abraham to demonstrate his trust and prove that God is faithful.

The way Abraham responded to God's voice, even before God gave the command, shows that Abraham was ready. He responded, "Here I am," which shows that Abraham had a deep relationship, or friendship, with God (Jas 2:23). Abraham was walking with God just like God had commanded him (Gen 17:1). God tested Abraham by asking him to present his only son Isaac as a **burnt offering**, to kill him as a sacrifice burned up on the altar to please God. Later, God would reveal how much He hates human sacrifice (Lev 18:21; Deut 12:31), so God never desired Isaac to be killed. This was a test of Abraham's faith.

This test was very hard for two reasons. First, Abraham loved Isaac very much, since Genesis 22:2 emphasizes "your son, your only son, whom you love." God is a **jealous** God: He does not share His glory with anyone or anything. God was testing him: did Abraham love Isaac more than God? Did Abraham love one of the blessings of the covenant more than the God who gave the blessing? Second, God had promised in Genesis 12 that Abraham would become a great nation, and that through this nation all the world would be blessed. Also, God repeatedly promised that this nation would come through Sarah's son, Isaac (Gen 17:19). How could this be if Isaac was dead? Abraham had to choose between holding on to Isaac and all that he loved or giving Isaac to God's control and trusting that God would do what was right.

Abraham obeyed God because he trusted God (22:3-10)

Abraham believed and **obeyed**, doing exactly what God told him to do. He did not doubt, argue, or delay, as he had at other times when he was still growing in his faith (Gen 17:18). Not only did he obey immediately, but he also obeyed persistently. He had time on the journey to think a lot about what God was asking. But he did not waver (Rom 4:20-21). Faith always produces this kind of obedience, and it is wrong for anyone to say that he has faith when he does not have a habit of obeying God (Jas 2:14-26).

Abraham grew strong in faith. He believed that both he and Isaac would return to the servants (Gen 22:5), he believed that God would provide the lamb (22:8), and he believed that if he killed Isaac God would raise him from the dead (Heb 11:17-19). Abraham had no doubt that God would find a way to make a great nation from Isaac.

THINK ABOUT IT

Is there anything in your life, good or evil, that you love more than God?



THINK ABOUT IT

Abraham's behavior before God was directed by his belief in God.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God tests Abraham • Genesis 22:1–19



Although this story is about Abraham, Isaac's role is important as a reminder of Jesus, who also carried the wood for His death up a hill in the same area. Isaac was at least in his teens, possibly over twenty at this time, because Isaac is capable of carrying enough firewood up a

mountain for a burnt offering, because of his age and his question in Genesis 22:7, he was aware of what was going on, and he could have resisted as Abraham began to prepare him for death. His submission is a reminder of the willing submission of Jesus (Isa 53:7), just as Abraham is a reminder of God's willing sacrifice of His only Son (John 3:16).

God provided the sacrifice and blessed Abraham (22:11–19)

After Abraham made all the preparations, he lifted his knife to kill his only son whom he loved. At that moment, his faith was fully proved. God already knew his faith, because God knows all things and knows the heart. So when God says, "now I know" (Gen 22:12), He does not mean that He has learned something new but that God has demonstrated this by actual experience. Also, Abraham, Isaac, and all who hear this story are now sure that Abraham's faith (which is also called "fear" of God) was real.

Once Abraham proved this, the angel of the LORD stopped him. In the first part of the story, God is called Elohim, but now God is called the LORD or the angel of

the LORD. LORD, or Yahweh, is the covenant, life-giving name of God used the people God has formed a special relationship with in the Old Testament. He spares Isaac and provides a substitute ram in order to keep His covenant and provide life.

This story is about God testing Abraham, but Genesis 22:14 makes it clear that this story is meant to be much bigger than that. Moses wrote, "It is said to this day, 'In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.'" This is Mount Moriah (22:2), the same place Solomon would later build the temple (2 Chr 3:1), where substitute sacrifices would be made every day. So this story is about God providing salvation to those who trust Him, and He provides salvation by means of a **substitute** sacrifice, killing an animal or person in the place of another. God provided substitute sacrifices during the Passover (Exod 12:12–13) and at Mt Sinai (13:12–13), and all of these substitute sacrifices look forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who is the perfect substitute sacrifice for all who have faith like Abraham's (1 Pet 1:18–19; 2 Cor 5:21). By His death the sins of those who believe are paid for and forgiven.

When God ordered Abraham to offer Isaac, God knew He would one day offer His own Son. That is why God confirms His promise that through Abraham's seed (Jesus) all the earth will be blessed (Gen 22:18). And God's promise is as strong as possible: "By Myself have I sworn" (22:16). God's promise is based on His own character, which does not change. Because of that, despite Israel's coming history of sin, God did provide a Savior for all who respond by faith (John 3:16).

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus is the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)



Lesson Outline

Faith is proven by obedience.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son (22:1–2).
2. Abraham obeyed God because he believed God would save Isaac (22:3–10; Heb 11:17–19).
3. God provided a ram and blessed Abraham (22:11–19).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God commanded Abraham to give up what he loved most (22:1–2).
 - God tested Abraham to see if he had learned to walk by faith (22:1).
 - Abraham was ready for this test because he lived close to God, saying “Here I am” (22:1, 11).
 - God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son whom he loved (22:2).
2. Abraham obeyed God because he trusted God (22:3–10; Heb 11:17–19).
 - Abraham obeyed quickly, early in the morning, and kept obeying during the journey (22:3–4).
 - Abraham believed that both he and Isaac would return (22:5).
 - Abraham believed that God would provide the lamb (22:8).
 - Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:17–19).
 - Abraham prepared to sacrifice his willing son (22:9–10).
3. God provided the sacrifice and blessed Abraham (22:11–19).
 - God stopped Abraham because God had now proved Abraham’s faith (22:10–11).
 - God provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice (22:12–13).
 - The ram is a picture of Jesus, whom God provided as a substitute sacrifice (22:14).
 - The LORD promised to bless Abraham’s descendants and send a seed to bless all nations (22:15–19).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who was Isaac, and what was special about him?**
He was Abraham's promised son.
- 2. Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering?**
To test Abraham.
- 3. Did God really want Abraham to kill Isaac?**
No. He wanted to show whom Abraham loved more, Him or Isaac.
- 4. Did Abraham trust God and pass the test? How?**
Yes. He was obedient to God.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What was God's test for Abraham?**
God told Abraham to take his only son to Moriah and offer him up as a burnt offering.
- 2. What is special about how God described Isaac?**
God described Abraham's son as "your son," "your only son," and the one "whom you love." Isaac was very precious to Abraham.
- 3. If Isaac were no longer alive, how would God's promises be kept?**
God's promises to Abraham required that Isaac remain alive and so Abraham believed that both he and Isaac would return (Gen 22:5).
- 4. How long did Abraham wait before he obeyed God's command?**
He did not wait a few days to think about whether or not he should obey. He obeyed God immediately—even though it was difficult.
- 5. What did Abraham believe God could do if he killed Isaac?**
Abraham believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead.
- 6. How did God provide for Abraham?**
He spared Isaac and provided a ram, a substitute, in order to keep His covenant and provide life.
- 7. Why did God test Abraham as He did?**
God's test showed that God was more special to Abraham than even the promised son, Isaac, was. No matter how much Abraham loved Isaac, he loved God more.
- 8. What did the angel of the LORD again guarantee to Abraham because he did not withhold Isaac from the LORD?**
The angel of the LORD reiterated the promise that the Lord had already made to Abraham. The angel of the LORD also told Abraham, "In your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

NAME GAME REVIEW

Begin describing a child in your class. Ask the children to guess what child you are describing. Then describe people from last week's Bible lesson. If the children don't guess the name, tell them who you are describing. Use pictures of the different Bible characters if available. Help the children say "Isaac" and "Abraham" and tell the children to listen for those names today.

HARD TO OBEY

Bring in a puppet and have it tell the children about times when it was hard to obey. Use examples from children's lives: sharing, arguing, making their beds, cleaning their rooms, etc. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about someone who had something very, very hard to obey. But in the end, his obedience showed that he loved God more than anything else.



ILLUSTRATE

GOD HAS PROVIDED A LAMB

Before class cut out circles on dark construction paper (circles should be around 3 inches in diameter). Roll masking tape into a ball and stick it to the back of the circles so that the circles are able to be stuck to clothing. During the lesson, pass out one or more circles with tape to each child. Instruct children to stick the dark circle to their cloths. Explain that this dark circle represents our sin. After all the stickers have been passed out, pull out a stuffed lamb or cross (you may even draw a cross on the marker board). Tell the children that God has provided a lamb, Jesus Christ, to bear our sins in our place. Allow the children to walk up to the front of the room and stick their dark circle ("sin") on the lamb or cross.

PROPS

During the Bible lesson, bring in various props such as firewood, a lamb, and a puppet to represent Isaac. Use them as you tell the story.



APPLY

CLIMBING MOUNT MORIAH

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, brown or green construction paper, glue or stapler, tape, printed copies of Genesis 22:8, crayons.

Directions: Use a piece of brown or green construction paper to make Mount Moriah. Roll the construction paper along the long side into a cone for the mountain. Tape the cone so that it will not unroll. Cut out pictures of Abraham, Isaac, and the ram for children. Have children color the cut outs. Tape on a picture of Abraham and Isaac as if they are climbing the mountain.

Climbing Mount Moriah
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God tests Abraham • Genesis 22:1–19



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

Ask children about their favorite things. Allow multiple children to answer. Then ask the children how they would feel if they were asked to give up their favorite things. In today's lesson, we will see how God asked Abraham to give up his favorite possession, his son.

SWORD DRILL: WHAT'S THIS "WE" STUFF?

Before Abraham continued up the mountain alone with Isaac, he told his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." If Abraham intended to obey God's command to sacrifice his son, how could he say they both would come back? Do a sword drill with the children, looking up Hebrews 11:17–19. Read this verse to the class in order to explain what Abraham was thinking.



ILLUSTRATE

TEST OF FAITH

Ask one of the children to come stand next to you. Explain that you are going to test his faith by asking him to fall backward and trust that you will catch him. Tell the children that in today's lesson, they will learn how God tested Abraham's faith.

REAL OR FAKE?

Bring in multiple items that look real but are fake. Some options include: fool's gold, counterfeit money, fake diamonds (earrings or ring), fake Rolex, and fake Oakley sunglasses. Explain that these items look real but, upon closer inspection, are actually fake. Tell the children that God examined Abraham's faith and that after closer inspection his faith was shown to be real.



APPLY

WHAT THEY TOOK

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, twigs, wood chips, aluminum foil, memory verse, crayons, and glue.

Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft page. Each circle will contain items representing what Abraham and Isaac carried to Mount Moriah. Give the children small twigs to represent fire, or have them draw fire in the first circle. In the second circle, have them glue wood chips. In the third circle, have them glue aluminum foil to represent the knife. Finally, give each child a copy of the memory verse to glue onto the bottom of the page.



What They Took
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

SOME GOOD STUFF

On a sheet of paper, have children list 10 things that are most precious to them. Then have them cross out one item at a time until only one or two things remain. What if God asked you to give up even these? When you really get down to basics, what is absolutely essential? If we lost everything, would Jesus be enough? In our lesson today, we will see a man, Abraham, who valued God above all else, even his most favorite possession.

YAHWEH YIREH

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Write “Yahweh Yireh” on the board. Give each child a copy of the “Yahweh Yireh” work sheet (*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*). Have children write down, on line 1, what they think this Hebrew statement means. After reading Genesis 22:1–8, ask the children to write down a second guess on line 2. Next read Genesis 22:9–19. Once you get to verse 14, the answer should become clear (“provide”). Ask the children when they were able to figure out the answer.



ILLUSTRATE

TEST OF STRENGTH

Bring long pieces of three different kinds of thread, string, ribbon, cord, floss, twine, or fishing line. Have children guess which of these items is the strongest. Can we tell by looking? How can we find out for sure? Ask for volunteers to help you pull the different strings to determine their strength.

SUBSTITUTES

Genesis 22:13 introduces the important concept of substitutionary atonement. Lead the class in a discussion of things that are often “substituted” for others. Ideas may include: substitute teachers, substituting eggs instead of hash browns at breakfast, using artificial sweetener in iced tea instead of sugar, or a friend picking you up from school instead of your parents. Emphasize that Jesus Christ served as the ultimate substitute when he died for our sins on the cross. Explain that the Old Testament sacrificial system was temporarily established until Christ fulfilled the requirement for death once and for all by giving His life in place of ours at His crucifixion.



APPLY

SWORD DRILL: TESTING FAITH

Race to find the verses listed below. Have all the children hold their closed Bibles in the air with one hand as each reference is read. Children must then wait for you to say “go” before finding the passage.

Genesis 22:1–2

Deuteronomy 8:2

Job 23:10

Psalm 17:3

Malachi 3:3

Luke 6:48

John 6:5–6

1 Corinthians 3:13

1 Corinthians 10:13

Hebrews 11:17

James 1:2–4; 1:12–13

1 Peter 1:7; 4:12