



Abraham Tested with Isaac

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Genesis 21 - 22



Abram believed God's promises to give him a family and to bless the world through that family. But after ten years of waiting, Abram and Sarai took matters into their own hands. Abram married Sarai's servant girl and had a son through her. Their sin would cause trouble for generations to come. The Lord put Abram's faith to the test again, and this time Abram proved that he trusted the Lord.

Day #1: Name Change

In most cultures, when a man and woman get married, the woman changes her name. She takes on the family name of her husband. This signifies a big change in her life. She is no longer single. She has been joined to her husband, and that name will be passed on to their children. Names were also very important in Bible times. People were named according to their character, and their place in their family.

Thirteen years after Abram and Hagar's son, Ishmael, was born, God came to Abram again.

+ *He said, "I am the Mighty God. Walk with me and live without any blame. I will now put into practice my covenant between Me and you. I will greatly increase your numbers. You will not be called Abram anymore. Your name will be Abraham, because I have made you a father of many nations. I will give you many children. Nations will come from you. And kings will come from you." - Genesis 17:1-2, 5-6*

The Lord changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means *father of many, many people*. God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah, which means *noble, or royal, woman*.

God promised Abraham that by that same time the next year, Sarah would have a son. They should name him Isaac. God said that the promises He had made to Abraham would be given through Sarah's son, Isaac.

***** Ask your parents about the names in your family. Discuss the meaning of your name and why your name was chosen. There are several times in the Bible when God chooses to change a person's name. But God can change more than just a name. He can change people!

Anyone who believes in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone! The new has come! - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Day #2: Laughter

God ALWAYS keeps His promises! Sarah had a baby the next year. Abraham was 100 years old, and Sarah was 90 years old. The Bible says their bodies were as good as dead (Romans 4:19). God had told them to name their son Isaac, which means laughter.

+ *Sarah said, "God has given laughter to me. Everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." - Genesis 21:6*

The next time you see a person who seems to be well advanced in years, try to imagine them chasing after an energetic toddler in a diaper!

Ishmael was a teenager when Isaac was born. The boys were half-brothers, because they had the same father, but different mothers. As Isaac grew up, Ishmael teased him. Remember, God had warned Hagar that Ishmael would be a wild young man who did not get along with any of his brothers (Genesis 16:12).

Sarah wanted to protect her young son, so she told Abraham to send Ishmael and Hagar away. Abraham did not know what to do about this. But God told him to do as Sarah asked. God promised Abraham that Ishmael would also have many offspring and become a large nation of people. But God reminded Abraham that the promises He made to bless Abraham and the rest of the world would come through Isaac.

The next morning, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael into the desert. The Lord protected and provided for Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness.

Ishmael was the result of Abraham **working in his own strength** to fulfill God's plan. This sin caused conflict between many people, and in the end, Ishmael was not accepted and did not receive his father's inheritance. Isaac was the result of **resting in God's power**. Isaac was welcomed into the family, and he received his father's inheritance and blessing.

***** In the same way, if we try to be accepted by God by **working in our own strength**, God will not accept us. But, if we **rest in what God did** when He sent His Son to die for us, then God will accept us. There is nothing we can do to earn forgiveness for our sin. The only way to be made right with God is to TRUST and HAVE FAITH in Jesus. (See Galatians 4:21-31.)

Day #3: Difficult Test

Hold something, like a pencil. Are you sure it is there? Are you positive? There is NO question that you are holding it. Just as you are **positive** it is real, and in your hand, Abraham was **positive** of God's promises.

Day #3 continued:

God sent Isaac, even though Abraham and Sarah were FAR too old to have a baby. Surely, seeing this miracle made Abraham's faith grow even more. Abraham was **positive** that God ALWAYS keeps His promises. Abraham was CERTAIN that God's blessings would come through Isaac, just as God had said.

Some time later, God put Abraham to the test. God called out to Abraham and gave him these instructions:



Take Isaac. Go to Moriah. Give him to Me there as a burnt offering. Sacrifice him on one of the mountains I will tell you about." - Genesis 22:2b

God told Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac. God had never asked anyone to do this before, and never has since then. This must have seemed strange to Abraham, but he did not question God. He simply obeyed. Just as before, God told Abraham to go, and Abraham went.

Abraham prepared everything needed to make a sacrifice, and set out for Mt. Moriah. He was planning to sacrifice his son, yet he believed they would **both** return (Genesis 22:5). Hebrews 11:19 says, "Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again." (NLT) God had promised to bring great blessings through Isaac, so Abraham knew the Lord would do it, no matter what.



Abraham proved that he had faith in God. He proved that he trusted God enough to do anything God told him to do. He knew that God ALWAYS keeps His promises, and God had the power to do all things - even raise Isaac from the dead.

Do you trust God enough to obey Him, even when you can't see how everything will work out in the end? Are you as **positive** about God's promises as you are about the pencil in your hand? When you struggle, pray and ask God to increase your faith (Mark 9:24).

Day #4: God Provides



"Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said. "But where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" - Genesis 22:7b

Isaac was still a child, but he was old enough to ask a very good question - "What are you planning to sacrifice?" Abraham's words show that he is depending on God, alone, for an answer.

Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." - Genesis 22:8a

Abraham built an altar and put the wood on it. He tied up Isaac and laid him on top of the wood. Then, just as he was about to kill Isaac, he heard a voice calling his name.

Day #4 continued:

The angel of the Lord spoke to him.

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you have respect for God. You have not held back from Me your son, your only son." - Genesis 22:12 (*The word "only" used here means begotten one, most dear, one that cannot be replaced.)*

So Abraham did not harm his dear Isaac. When Abraham looked up, he saw a ram caught in a bush by its horns. Because the ram was caught by its horns, it was not scratched or cut up by the bush. The Lord provided a perfect animal as a substitute sacrifice for Isaac. He went to get it and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of Isaac. Abraham named that mountain, "The Lord will provide."



The Bible gives us many names for God. Hagar called Him, "The God who sees me." Abraham said, "The Lord will Provide." Can you think of a time when God did something to show Himself to you? What name can you think of for the Lord?

Day #5: Our Substitute

The dictionary defines the word substitute as "a person or thing that takes the place of another person or thing." Can you think of a time when a substitute is used? (A substitute teacher, a pinch hitter, egg substitute) Discuss why these substitutes are used.

At just the right moment, God provided a **substitute sacrifice** for Isaac. God sent an animal for Abraham to offer, instead of his son.

We have learned that sin always separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). And we have also learned that we have all sinned.



When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. - Romans 5:12 NLT

Because of our sin, each of us deserves death. We deserve to be separated from God forever. But God is loving and merciful. He does not want ANYONE to be separated from Him (2 Peter 3:9).

So, at just the right time, God provided a perfect, final **substitute sacrifice** for us - His Son Jesus. The Bible calls Jesus, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) When we place our trust in Jesus, our substitute sacrifice, we are forgiven of our sins and God accepts us.



Abraham was accepted by God because of his faith (Romans 4:22). If you trust God and have placed your faith in Jesus, you, too, are accepted by God!

We believe in the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. So God will accept our faith and make us right with Himself. - Romans 4:23b