

Genesis 22: Seven Lessons on True Faith from Abraham's Greatest Test of His Faith

Introduction: Genesis Chapter 22 tells the story of God's final and greatest test of Abraham's faith. God's first nine tests were designed to build up Abraham's faith. This last test was to reveal the true faith of Abraham that Christ had perfected in him. In a foreshadow of Christ's death at the cross, God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his only son. To the Jews, this story is called either "the Binding of Isaac" (*Akedat Yitzhak*) or just "the Binding" (*Akedah* or *Aqedah*). Here, God reveals seven lessons on true faith. True faith is: (1) tested so you can trust it; (2) responsive to God's calling; (3) submits to His will; (4) trusts in His Word; (5) obeys Him; (6) perfected through Christ's sacrifice; and (7) rewarded by Christ in heaven and here on Earth.

First, God tested Abraham to see if his love for his son was greater than his love for God. This test (along with the prior tests) were calculated to perfect Abraham's faith. God will also test your faith. Like Abraham, Jesus will test your faith until it is perfected. Second, Abraham promptly responded to God's calling by taking Isaac without delay to the appointed place for the sacrifice. From this, God reveals that true faith is responsive to His calling. Third, Isaac submitted to this sacrifice by carrying the wood for the sacrifice and by not resisting. From this, God reveals that true faith submits to the will of God. Fourth, Abraham trusted God to provide a substitute sacrifice. From this, God reveals that true faith trusts in God's Word and His promises. Fifth, when no substitute sacrifice appeared, Abraham raised his dagger with unquestioning obedience believing that God would raise Isaac from the dead. From this, God reveals that true faith is obedient, even when God's reasons seem unclear. Sixth, just before the moment of sacrifice, the "angel of the LORD" (one of many pre-incarnate appearances of Christ) told Abraham to stop. Abraham then saw a ram trapped with its horns in a thicket. This foreshadowed the substitute sacrifice of Christ, who came to the cross with a crown of thorns. From this, God reveals that true faith is perfected through faith in Christ's substitute sacrifice at the cross. Finally, God rewarded Abraham and all his descendants because of his faith. Through true faith in Christ, the blessings that God offered to Abraham will be extended to you as well.

1. Testing: True Faith is Tested until Perfected. Gen. 22:1-2.
 - God's final test of Abraham to sacrifice his son that he loved. As Abraham's final of ten tests of faith, God tested him to see if his love for God's gift of a son was greater than his love for God: "¹ Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' ² He said, 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.'" (Gen. 22:1-2). Abraham had waited until he was 100 years old to have a son with Sarah. He also waited 25 years after God first promised him a son for Isaac to come. God had also previously told Abraham to drive away his only other son Ishmael. Abraham had grown to love Isaac so much that he risked loving the gift more than the giver. The torment that Abraham must have felt at this test foreshadowed the pain that God would feel at giving His only son for all the world's sinners.
 - God's sacrifice of His only beloved son. Although God's love runs throughout the Bible, this is the first time the word "love" appears (Gen. 22:2). Just as Abraham loved Isaac, God called Jesus His "beloved son": "and a voice came out of the heavens: 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'" (Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22; Matt. 3:17). "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This

is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matt. 17:5). Like Abraham, God faced a choice. Yet, God’s choice had consequences for all of humanity. He could let sinners everywhere perish or sacrifice His only son. In the end, His love for the world’s sinners was so great that He sacrificed His only son to save them: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (Jo. 3:16). God will not give you the same test as He gave Abraham. Yet, He will test your heart to reveal if you love anything more than Him. Is your love for the things of this world (like money or success) greater than your love for Him?

- A faith that is never tested cannot be trusted. Most modern translations state that God “tested” Abraham (NASB/NIV/NKJ). Yet, the original King James Bible says that God “tempted” Abraham (Gen. 22:1). The older translation created confusion amongst believers. The Bible is clear God cannot and will never “tempt” you. “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.” (Jam. 1:13). Only the devil tempts. His temptations use your flesh to bring you down. “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.” (Jam. 1:14). Although God never tempts, He will “test” your faith (Jer. 17:10; 20:12). His tests are designed to build up your faith. He tests you to show you where your heart is evil so that you can correct it (Jer. 17:9). If He never tested you, you would go into spiritual warfare never knowing if you were ready. It would be like sending an army into battle without any training. Or, it would be like sending a passenger plane into the sky with passengers, yet without ever having tested either the plane or the pilot first. Your faith would be untrustworthy. By testing you, He seeks to build and perfect your faith. Are you inviting God to test to both show your weaknesses and to build up your faith?
- Learn from God’s testing. Abraham failed many times during his first nine tests of faith. He failed his test to leave all of his family behind in Ur. He failed his test to stay in the Promised Land when he experienced the first draught. He failed his test when he lied about his marriage to Pharaoh to protect his own life. He failed his test when he took Hagar as his concubine instead of waiting for God’s promise to give Sarah a son. He also failed his test when he stood before Abimelech and again lied about his relationship with his wife to protect himself. He then failed to repent of this sin. Humans would have long ago written him off. Yet, his faith grew, and he eventually learned from his mistakes. David was also a sinner. He committed adultery and then tried to cover it up with murder. Yet, he later showed that he learned from his mistakes by inviting God to search his heart to expose his sins (Ps. 139:23). His openness to learning from his sins made him a man after God’s heart (Acts 13:22). God saw these men not as the sinners they were but as the saints they would become. If you say to God that there is no need for Him to test you because you have no sin, His truth is not in you (1 Jo. 1:8). Are you inviting God to show you your sins?
- Rejoice in the love that has motivated God’s testing. Your old sins should not weigh you down. Instead, rejoice that God has given you the chance to learn and change from your prior mistakes: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,” (Jam. 1:2). If God has tested you with a trial, do you find joy in His desire to build up your faith?
- Your love for God must come before your family. Like Abraham, God does not want you to love His gifts or your family over Him as the giver and the source of your joy: “He who

loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matt. 10:37). “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.” (Lk. 14:26). “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matt. 10:34-37). Does your family come before Jesus?

- Don’t let wealth or worldly accomplishments come before Christ. Sadly, many love their wealth or worldly accomplishments more than their family. These things also cannot take priority in your life over Jesus: “Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.” (Matt. 19:20-22). If Jesus gave you a test to part with your worldly possession or give up your job to become a nobody for Him, would you do it?
2. Responsiveness: True Faith Responds to God’s Calling Without Delay. Gen. 22:3.
- Abraham’s prompt response to God’s ultimate test of faith. Abraham showed that he had become strong in his faith by promptly responding to God’s calling: “*So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*” (Gen. 22:3). Abraham took Isaac the very day after God gave this test. The fact that he “rose early in the morning” further means that he slept soundly in the face of this frightening test. His early departure further means that he did not delay by pleading with God or by looking for an alternative way to satisfy God’s final test of faith. Abraham also had acted promptly to God’s callings on other occasions. For example, he circumcised all the men in his household on “*very same day, as God had said to him.*” (Gen. 17:23). His regular promptness in responding to God shows that he was a man of true faith.
 - Respond to Jesus’ calling in your life without delay. When one disciple asked Jesus, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father,” He responded, “Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead.” (Matt. 8:21-23). If you long for your old life, Jesus warns that you are not ready for His Kingdom: “But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’” (Lk. 9:62). He does not want you to wait for a convenient time before you serve Him. He has also given every believer “talents” that are to be used for His Kingdom (Matt. 25:14-30). If you have been given gifts like teaching, preaching, hospitality, or prayer, He wants you to use those talents without delay for His Kingdom. If you are successful or have money, that money can also be used to further His Kingdom. If you are failing to promptly use your talents for His Kingdom, you have committed the sin of slothfulness: “The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, so he begs during the harvest and has nothing.” (Prov. 20:4; 21:25). “Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” (Prov. 10:4; 12:24). Are you promptly fulfilling His calling in your life? Or, are you waiting for a convenient time?

3. Submission: True Faith Does Not Resist God's Calling. Gen. 22:4-6.
- Isaac's submission to God's calling for His sacrifice. Abraham was not the only one who showed faith. Isaac also showed faith by willingly being led to the slaughter when he could have easily overpowered Abraham: ⁴ *On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.* ⁵ *Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.'* ⁶ *Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.*" (Gen. 22:4-6). Isaac willingly carried the wood that he knew Abraham would use to burn him. Like his father, his faith had grown strong. The Protestant reformer John Calvin explained that "Isaac is not to be thought of as simply one of the common company of men, but as one who contained Christ in himself."
 - Jesus' sacrifice and Isaac's near sacrifice most likely occurred when they were the same age. Many Christians and Jews disagree about Isaac's age at the time of his near sacrifice. Many Christians have relied upon Abraham's reference to Isaac as a "lad" to assume that he was only a teenager: *"I and the lad will go over there . . ."* (Gen. 22:5). Thus, most of the classical Christian paintings from the Renaissance Era reflect Isaac as a young boy. Yet, according to the Jewish Talmud, he was believed to be closer to 37 at the time of this account (*Seder Olam Rabbah* 1). This based upon the fact that Sarah died after this account at age 127 (Gen. 23:1). She gave birth at age 90 (Gen. 17:17, 21). Thus, assuming there was no significant gap between Genesis chapters 22 and 23 (and the Bible mentions none), Isaac was most likely closer to age 37 than being a teenager at the time of this test of faith. The answer to this debate is not a salvation issue. Yet, because every other detail regarding this sacrifice closely matches Christ's future sacrifice, he was likely closer to Christ's age at the time of His crucifixion, 33. Some might find it to be a pointless academic exercise to guess Isaac's age. Yet, Isaac's most likely older age is important because it suggests that Isaac could have easily resisted if he wanted to: "Remove the image of the helpless young boy led obliviously to his death, and replace it with the image of an adult man, in full control of his faculties, willingly holding up his wrists for his father to bind, not unlike our Master, who for the love of His Father and the love of His God, consented to the shame of the cross." (First Fruits of Zion, Torah Club, Vol. 2, *Shadows of the Messiah, Vayera*, 2016 p. 78).
 - Jesus also carried His cross to His death. The wood that was laid upon Isaac symbolized the cross that Jesus carried to His death. "So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified. They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha." (Jo. 19:16-17; Matt. 27:32-33; Mk. 15:21). Like Isaac, Jesus was obedient unto death. "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Phil 2:8; Is. 53:5-7). Jesus could have resisted but chose not to do so. Christ, like Isaac could have easily escaped from His captors. Yet, He submitted to the will of God the Father.
 - Jesus also came to Jerusalem riding a donkey. Abraham took Isaac to the location of the sacrifice riding on a donkey (Gen. 22:3-4). The prophet Zechariah later prophesized that the Messiah would also come to Jerusalem in humble submission on a donkey: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey,

even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zech. 9:9). By Jewish tradition, Abraham, Moses (during his journey to save the Jews in Egypt), and the future Messiah would all ride the same donkey (*Pirkei deRabbi Eleazar* 31). Jesus later fulfilled this prophesy by coming to Jerusalem on what is now called “Palm Sunday” in submission while riding on a donkey (Matt. 21:2-7; Jo. 12:14-15). Jesus came to His sacrifice for you in humble submission.

- Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. Just like Abraham’s three-day journey (Gen. 22:4), Jesus spent three days in the grave: “and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,” (1 Cor. 15:4; Matt. 16:21). Yet, death could not hold Him in the grave: “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.” (Act 2:24). He has conquered death so that you might live if you believe in faith in His resurrection.
 - Pick up your cross and follow after Jesus. Although you are not called upon to sacrifice children, you are called to sacrifice or give up the things in life that you value more than Jesus: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.’” (Matt. 16:24-25; Mk. 8:34; Lk. 9:23). “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” (Lk. 14:21; Matt. 10:38). “He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.” (Jo. 12:25). Are you willing to lose your worldly importance and become a nobody here on Earth to do the His work for the Kingdom?
4. Trust: True Faith Places Complete Trust in God to Provide. Gen. 22:7-8.
- Abraham’s unquestioning trust in God to provide a way for Isaac to survive. When Isaac asked where the sacrifice would come from, Abraham did not hesitate in trusting that God would provide His own sacrifice: “⁷ Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ And he said, ‘Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ ⁸ Abraham said, ‘God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ So the two of them walked on together.” (Gen. 22:7-8). We know that Abraham was convinced that Isaac would return alive because he told his servants that both he and Isaac would return after worshipping upon God’s chosen mountain: “⁵ Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.’” (Gen. 22:5). Isaac heard these words and did not question his father’s faith. The fact that “*the two of them walked on together*” means that they walked in agreement. The Hebrew word “*yachdav*” “together” expresses unity (First Fruits of Zion p. 82). Thus, both trusted God to provide a substitute sacrifice.
 - Trust in God’s Word. Like Abraham and Isaac, you should never rely solely upon your own understanding. You must trust Him even if the reason for His test or His calling does not seem clear at the time: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil.” (Prov. 3:5-7; 28:26; Ps. 62:8). “Trust in the LORD forever, for in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock.” (Is. 26:4). Neither Abraham and Isaac had to rely upon the unknown. Both could trust in God’s Word that Abraham and then Isaac would become the patriarchs of

a great nation. “² And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, a make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing;” (Gen. 12:2). When you are tested, you also never need to wonder what to do. You have God’s Word and His Holy Spirit to guide your every step and your every decision (Jo. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13; Ps. 119:105). When you feel uncertain, do you read the Word and pray for the Spirit to both encourage and guide you?

- All things are possible through Christ when you step out in faith to serve Him. When you step out in faith to serve Jesus’ calling in your life, He can also give you the strength to complete your tasks for Him: “And looking at them Jesus said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” (Matt. 19:26; Mk. 10:27; Lk. 18:27). “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13). Is there any calling in your life that you have ignored due to age, health, work, family, or some other reason?
5. Obedience: Truth Faith Is Evidenced Through Complete Obedience. Gen. 22:9-12.
- Abraham and Isaac’s obedience to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham showed that his faith was alive through his obedience. He raised the dagger to strike the final blow and would have done so if Jesus in a pre-incarnate form had not stopped him: “⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ ¹² He said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’” (Gen. 22:9-12). Abraham was not alone in his great obedience. Isaac showed his obedience in being bound for the sacrifice.
 - Abraham believed in faith that God would raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham saw how God had transformed Sarah’s dead womb at age 90 to give birth to Isaac. When he did not see the substitute sacrifice, he believed in faith that God would also raise Isaac from death if he sacrificed him: “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, ‘in Isaac your descendants shall be called.’ He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.” (Heb. 11:17-19).
 - Jesus also believed in faith that God the Father would raise Him from the dead. Like Isaac, Jesus also willingly submitted Himself at the cross knowing that God would raise Him from the dead. Like Isaac, Jesus did not protest. Instead, He was willingly led to the slaughter: “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.” (Is. 53:7). He did not contest the false charges against Him (Matt. 26:63; 27:12; Mk. 14:6; 15:5; Lk. 23:9; Jo. 19:9). “Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: ‘He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the Earth.’” (Acts 8:32-3). He had the ability to stop the crucifixion but chose not to in order to fulfill God the Father’s will: “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My

Father.” (Jo. 10:18). “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:53).

- Belief in Jesus’ resurrection will also be credited to you as righteousness. If you believe in Christ’s resurrection just as Abraham believed that God would resurrect his son it will also be credited to you as righteousness: “yet, with respect to the promise of God, [Abraham] did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore, it was also credited to him as righteousness. Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.” (Ro. 4:20-25). Is there any unbelief in you?
- Faith without works is dead. James also pointed to Abraham’s willingness to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice as proof that faith without works is dead: “But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;” (Jam. 2:20-22). Is your faith evidenced by acts of devotion and love for others? If not, it is dead.
- Jesus also wants your complete obedience and submission. Jesus does not call upon anyone to sacrifice their children. God prohibited child sacrifices (Lev. 18:21; 20:3-4; Dt. 12:31; 18:10; Jer. 32:35). Jesus’ death was also a one-time sacrifice that forever fulfilled the need for sacrifices (Heb. 10:14). Yet, throughout the Bible, God told His people to submit to Him and be obedient (e.g., Dt. 6:3-4; 9:1; 20:3; Josh. 1:7). Indeed, this account is directly linked to the obedience that God requires under His Ten Commandments: “There is a sure verbal linkage involving ‘test’ and ‘fear,’ where the two words occur together in only two passages: Abraham’s experience at Moriah (22:1, 12) and Abraham’s descendants at another mount, Sinai (Exodus 20:20). Abraham’s obedience is viewed as the archetype of God’s expectations for Israel’s loyalty to the Ten Words (Ten Commandments).” (Kenneth Mathews, “*The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*” Genesis 1-11:26, Vol. 1A, (B&H Publishing Group Nashville Tenn. 1996) p. 284). Today, Christians are no longer “under the Law” in the sense that they must comply with it to be saved (Gal. 5:18; Ro. 7:6; 8:3). By “fulfilling” the Law, Christ freed believers from the impossible task of trying to obtain salvation through the Law (Matt. 5:17). Yet, Jesus also says that, if you love Him, you will keep His Commandments: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (Jo. 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 Jo. 5:3; 2 Jo. 1:6). Before God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mount Horeb, He revealed His name to be the great “I AM” (Ex. 3:13-15). Jesus later revealed that He was the great “I AM.” (Jo. 8:57-58). Thus, Jesus gave the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mount Horeb. Whether you follow His Commandments out of love is also a test for whether you really know Him (1 John 2:3; 1 Cor. 7:19). Do you follow His Commandments out of love and not obligation?
- Fear God by hating evil. In His pre-incarnate appearance, Jesus commended Abraham for fearing God (Gen 22:12). “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Prov. 1:7). Yet, fearing God does not mean that you fear that He will arbitrarily do something to you. It is instead defined as “hating” evil (Prov.

8:13). Disobeying God is one form of evil. Abraham feared disobeying God, even if he did not understand the purpose behind His test. Are you tolerating evil by disobeying God?

6. Christ's Sacrifice: True Faith is Perfected Through Christ's Sacrifice. Gen. 22:13-14.

- God's provision of a substitute sacrifice for Isaac. Just as Abraham prophetically foretold, God provided a substitute sacrifice for Isaac: “¹³ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place *The LORD Will Provide*, as it is said to this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.’” (Gen. 22:13-14). The translated name “*The LORD Will Provide*” is in Hebrew “Jehovah – Jireh.” Abraham did not name the mountain after his test. Instead, He celebrated out of gratitude for God's provision. God provided a way for Isaac to be saved through faith and His substitute sacrifice. In every way, Isaac in this account foreshadowed Jesus at the cross: “Both were loved by their father. Both offered themselves willingly. Both carried wood up the hill of their sacrifice. Both were sacrificed on the same hill. Both were delivered from death on the third day.” (David Guzik Genesis 22).
- God sacrificed His only son out of love for you. When Abraham said that God would “*provide* for Himself” the offering (Gen. 22:8), the actual Hebrew translation is “see” for Himself. The Jews saw this as a prophetic vision. The blood of this sacrifice would later be used for the Passover (Ex. 12:13) to save Israel (*Mechilta, Pischa*, First Fruit of Zion p. 83). Jesus became the Passover sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7). He was the substitute offering for both Isaac and every person on Earth (John 3:16; 10:9; 11:25; 14:6). It is your faith alone in His sacrifice that will save you: “Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘The righteous man shall live by faith.’” (Gal. 3:11; 5:18; Ro. 7:6; 8:3). If you are grateful for His sacrifice, you can make your life a “living sacrifice” of gratitude (Ro. 12:1).
- Jesus was the substitute sacrifice that God provided for Isaac. In the Old Testament, sin always required the payment of a “ram” offering for the sin against God. This was called a “guilt” offering: “Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the LORD, *a ram without defect* from the flock, according to your valuation, for *a guilt offering*, and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt.” (Lev. 6:6-7). Jesus was the ram without defect, who was sacrificed to pay for humanity's sins. He was offered as your substitute “guilt” offering against God. “But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself *as a guilt offering*, . . . as He will bear their iniquities.” (Is. 53:10-11). In the New Testament, the “guilt offering” is called a “ransom” payment: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a *ransom* for many.” (Mark 10:45; Matt. 20:28). “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, *who gave Himself as a ransom for all*, the testimony given at the proper time.” (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus was also the Passover Lamb, who took on the sins of the world: “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (Jo. 1:29). By Jewish tradition, Isaac's sacrifice also happened during Passover (*Exodus Rabbah* 15:11). Thus, the ram foreshadowed Jesus. If you are in awe at His sacrifice for you, live in submission to Him.

- Jesus wore a crown of thorns to give you the crown of life. The ram's head was "*caught in a thicket.*" (Gen. 22:13). This again foreshadowed Jesus. At His death, He wore a painful crown of thorns: "And the soldiers *twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head,* and put a purple robe on Him;" (Jo. 19:2, 5; Matt. 27:28-29; Mk. 15:17). Jesus wore a crown of pain and shame so that you could wear a crown of life: ". . . Be faithful until death, and *I will give you the crown of life.*" (Rev. 2:10(b); 1 Cor. 9:25). If you are grateful at your future crown of life, are you singing His praise through worship?
 - Jesus was sacrificed in the same spot as Isaac's ram to fulfill the Law. The Bible identifies the mountain where the near sacrifice took place as the "the mount of the LORD" (Gen. 22:14). This same term, later called "Mount Moriah," is used to identify the place where Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem (Ps. 24:3; Is. 2:3; 30:29; 2 Chron. 3:1; Zech. 8:3). This was later called Calvary Hill where He was sacrificed. It is now called the "Temple Mount". At the end of the sacrifice, the "*flesh*" of the sacrifice had to be taken outside of "the camp" (Lev. 4:11-12; 6:10-11; 9:11). Jesus became the "*flesh*" and the sin of mankind was cast upon Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Thus, to fulfill the Law, He was also led outside of Jerusalem to die on Calvary Hill (Jo. 19:16-19). "For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate." (Heb. 13:11-12). Thus, Jesus removed your sins with His death. If you bring those sins back, you dishonor His death and all His suffering for you.
 - Jesus suffered the piercing and the fire for you. Isaac would have been stabbed with Abraham's blade. He then would have been burned in a fire. Again, Christ assumed these things for you. "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed." (Is. 53:7). "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Pet. 2:24). He went to the fires of hell (yet without experiencing decay) so that you would now never have to: "he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay." (Acts 2:31).
7. Christ's Reward: True Faith Results in Jesus' Blessings. Gen. 22:15-24.
- God's blessings upon Abraham for his perfected faith. Because of his faith, both Abraham and all his future descendants received God's blessings: "¹⁵ *Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,* ¹⁶ *and said, 'By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,* ¹⁷ *indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.* ¹⁸ *In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.'* ¹⁹ *So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba.*" (Gen. 22:15-19). The blessings that God extended to Abraham for his faith extend to you when you believe as well.
 - God blessed all the nations of the Earth through Abraham. God promised: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Gen. 22:18).

At this point, God had repeated on seven occasions His promise to extend Abraham's blessing to include countless future descendants: (1) Gen. 12:3(b); (2) 13:16; (3) 15:5; (4) 16:10; (5) 17:4-5; (6) 18:18; (7) 22:18. Jesus completed this promise by becoming the "seed" of Abraham through which God's blessings are extended to you: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is, Christ." (Gal. 3:16). You only need to believe in Christ to be an heir to the promise: "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise." (Gal. 3:29). As an heir to the promise, He also has promised you eternal life (Jo. 14:2). If you believe in Him, your inheritance cannot be taken away (Ro. 10:9-10). "and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." (Jo. 10:28). "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." (Jo. 6:37). Your worldly inheritance can disappear. Yet, your eternal inheritance in Christ will not.

- God's blessings upon Abraham's family for his perfected faith. Consistent with God's promise, His blessings to Abraham extended to others, including the family that he partially left: "²⁰ Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, 'Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: ²¹ Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram ²² and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel.' ²³ Bethuel became the father of Rebekah; these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. ²⁴ His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.'" (Gen. 22:20-24). Although his family practiced idolatry, God would later bless this idol-worshipping family to give Isaac a wife and descendants.
- The foreshadow of the wait for the return of the bridegroom. Isaac does not return with Abraham (Gen. 22:19). He also is not mentioned again until he looks for his bride two chapters later. This again foreshadowed Jesus. After His resurrection, He disappeared. Yet, like Isaac, His next appearance will be at the time of His wedding when He will marry His bride, the Church (Rev. 19:9). As part of Abraham's extended family, you will also benefit from Christ's return: "Abraham's confident declaration, 'Stay here with the donkey . . . we will worship and return to you,' alludes to the return of one who will come 'humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" (First Fruits of Zion p. 81).
- The horns of Isaac's substitute sacrifice will herald Jesus' return. The two horns also foreshadow the two covenants of God. The Old Covenant of the Ten Commandments was heralded from one of the ram's horn at mount Horab. The second will herald the return of the Messiah: "The midrash claims that the two horns of the ram became the two trumpets, the *shofarot* of God. The Holy One, blessed be He, blew the first shofar at Mount Sinai on the occasion of the giving of the Torah as described in Exodus 19. He will sound the second one to herald the coming of Messiah. 'The shofar blown at Mount Sinai, when the Torah was given, came from the ram which had been sacrificed in place of Isaac. The left horn was blown for a shofar at Mount Sinai, and the right horn will be blown to herald the coming Messiah. The right horn was larger than the left, and thus concerning the days of Messiah is it written [in Isaiah 27:13], 'On that day, a great shofar will be blown,' (*Pirkei de Rabbi Elezar* 31; First Fruits of Zion p. 86). Some believe that this is impossible because of Abraham's burnt offering. The horns would have burn up. Yet, it is possible if God resurrected the ram. Thus, this again foreshadowed Jesus (First Fruits of Zion p. 86).