

=EVENTS FROM GENESIS=

Lesson 11
Abraham and Isaac

AIM: to teach my pupils to have the faith of Abraham, and that it is only by faith that anyone can come to God.

POINT OF CONTACT: Everybody who has ever attended school has had to take some tests. The tests were given for the purpose of determining whether the student had mastered the subject matter which had been assigned for them to learn.

INTRODUCTION: In this week's lesson, Abraham is going to a certain place for a specific purpose—the place and the purpose being shown by God. Abraham's faith will be once again displayed. What is faith? Faith is believing and then acting upon that trust. James said, "...I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18)

I. ABRAHAM'S FAITH REWARDED.

1. Isaac was born. The home life of Abraham and Sarah was happily centered around the child which God had many years before promised to Abraham and Sarah. God had commanded that the baby should be named "Isaac," which means "laughter."
 - 1) Sarah was able to laugh because of the son which God had given her. See Genesis 21:6, 7.
 - 2) Abraham loved Isaac. Read Genesis 22:2. Abraham was a good father who taught Isaac to obey him and to love and obey God. See Genesis 18:19.
2. Abraham declared a feast day. It was a day chosen as the day to recognize the fact that Isaac was growing up. Isaac was weaned. Read Genesis 21:8.
 - 1) It was no doubt a day for presenting him to the Lord. Perhaps at the feast of weaning, Abraham and Sarah presented Isaac to the Lord as Hannah and Elkanah hundreds of years later presented Samuel when he was weaned. Notice I Samuel 1:24-28.
 - 2) It was a happy time. There was probably a lot of happy talking and laughing as friends and members of the household came to greet Abraham, Sarah and their little boy, thus sharing their holiday.
3. Abraham and Sarah watched their boy grow into adulthood. This was the son which God had promised to them and in whom other promises rested.

II. ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED. See Genesis 22:1-12.

1. God was the tester. In Genesis 22:1, the word "tempt" means "to test." It could not mean "to tempt to do evil." Read James 1:13, 14. God never leads us into temptation; contrariwise, He makes a way of escape from any temptation which comes our way, as we learn in I Corinthians 10:13.
2. God's test was not to check Abraham's knowledge. It was to test his faith in God, which faith has to include his love for God. Notice Genesis 22:12.
 - 1) Question #1 was: "Will you sacrifice your only son as an offering to Me?" God was saying, "Will you take Isaac, the son whom I had promised would be the progenitor of the great nation which I will make of you, and kill him for Me?" (It is thought that Isaac was 25 years old by now.) "Offer him as a burnt offering on an altar." (Burnt offerings were made as a substitute for the person making the offering; it was atonement or covering for his sins. The offering had to be a male of the herd, one without blemish. The offering had to be made of the free will of the person making the offering. The person making the offering was to place his hand upon his burnt offering and confess his sins before the animal was slain. The shedding of blood made atonement for the soul.)
 - 2) Question #2 was: "Will you go to the place I will show you to make this offering?" God instructed Abraham to go into Moriah to offer Isaac on one of the mountains there. (Moriah is a district, the location of which has been debated by Bible scholars. Some think that the mountain which God showed Abraham was the one upon which Solomon built the temple.)
3. Abraham passed the test. He followed God's instructions exactly.
 - 1) He arose early the next morning to carry out God's orders. He assigned two young men from his company of workers to accompany him and Isaac on the journey. (It seems that the young men knew only that Abraham and Isaac were going to a certain place for the express purpose of worshipping God, but did not know the details of that worship service.) They traveled for

two days; on the third day Abraham instructed the two young men to wait at a certain place with the donkey while Abraham and Isaac would ascend the mountain alone.

- 2) Abraham reasoned with himself about God's instructions; he was not following like some robot. He wondered how God's orders could be in keeping with the covenant which God had made with him. He reasoned it this way: If God wanted him to kill Isaac, then He must have plans for resurrecting him from the dead. Read Hebrews 11:17-19. Could it be that Abraham was thinking that here in his son was the ultimate Sacrifice that would have to be made for our sin? He saw the promises "afar off" concerning the coming Saviour. See Hebrews 11:13.
- 3) Isaac questioned the circumstances of the event—the absence of the sacrifice, for one thing. When Abraham recognized the place to which God was leading him, he left the two young men behind so that he could go the rest of the way alone with Isaac. Isaac was instructed to carry the firewood; Abraham had a torch of flame and a knife. Isaac noticed that they did not have a lamb for sacrifice and, perhaps, that there was no more opportunity now to buy such an animal from anyone in this area. Abraham told Isaac, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."
- 4) Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son. He built an altar on top of the mountain which he and Isaac had climbed. He then laid the wood on the altar. Can you imagine the beating, breaking heart of Abraham as he came to the very moment of actually sacrificing his well-beloved son? Yet, he trusted God that everything would work out all right. Next, he tied up his son and laid him on the altar. Now Isaac knew the answer to his question concerning what was to be the sacrifice. (What must have been the conversation between Abraham and his son while Abraham was tying him up?)
- 5) Abraham got his knife in hand to plunge it into his son's body. God stopped him at that moment. The angel of the Lord spoke from Heaven and told Abraham not to kill his son. God told Abraham that he had passed the test.

III. ABRAHAM'S FAITH STANDS PROVEN.

1. God put the grade of EXCELLENT upon Abraham's test. He said that now He knew that Abraham truly feared Him, even to the point of not withholding his own son from death at his hand. Read these touching words in Genesis 22:12.
2. God did provide the sacrifice. Abraham saw a ram caught by his horns in some thick bushes. Abraham took the ram and offered him as the burnt offering instead of his son. See Genesis 22:13.
3. Abraham gave the place a name: "Jehovah-jireh." The name means: "...In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." (Genesis 22:14)
4. Abraham, Isaac and the two young men returned home to live in Beer-sheba.

CONCLUSION: Wrapped up in the story of Abraham is what every person wants—PEACE. God had a purpose in recording these events in the life of Abraham; He says so in Romans 4:13-25. The story was written so that we might know that righteousness—our right to come to God—is given to us, not in reward for our so-called good works, but as a reward just for believing Him. God commands that we accept His way of coming to Him—trusting Jesus as our Saviour. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)