

Bible Stories for Adults

The Offering of Isaac

Genesis 16, 21-22

Opening

Gathering: Tell of a time you were tested by God and how it helped you grow spiritually.

Today's Focus: To recognize that God calls us to be faithful even through trials and hardships and that He promises to bless us and build us up through such tests.

Key Verses: *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* Hebrews 11:1

What does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. Galatians 4:30-31

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Child of the Covenant (*Genesis 17:17-21*)

What was the first part of God's promise to Abram?

Genesis 12:2-3 = *I will make you into a great nation*

Did God mean that Abram would have lots of descendants?

Genesis 13:16 = *Like the dust of the earth*

How did this part of the promise lead to doubt for Abram?

Genesis 15:2-3 = *He was very old and had no children of his own*

Did God answer Abram's doubts?

Genesis 15:4-6 = *Yes, and Abram believed the Lord (trusted in the promise)*

I Can Help (*Genesis 16*)

How did Abram try to help God with his promise after more years passed?

Genesis 16:1-2 = *Build a family through Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant*

How did Hagar feel about her part in this plan?

Genesis 16:3-4 = *She participated, then became smug with having Abram's child*

How did Sarai deal with Hagar's attitude?

Genesis 16:5-6 = *She blamed Abram for her idea, then mistreated her*

Where did Hagar run to?

Genesis 16:7-9 = *To the Sinai Desert; Angel told her to return and submit to Sarai*

What else did the angel have to say to Hagar?

Genesis 16:10-12 = *Ishmael would have many descendants, but would be a trouble-maker*

How did Hagar respond to the mixed blessing?

Genesis 16:13-16 = *She praised God, gave son the name instructed by the angel*

God's Plan (*Genesis 17*)

Was Ishmael the child through whom God's covenant would be realized?

Genesis 17:1-2; 5, 15-16 (1-16) = *The covenant child would be through Sarah*

Did Abraham understand this to be God's plan all along? = *Both blessed, Covenant to Isaac*

Genesis 17:17-21 (17-27) = *No, he thought he had taken care of the situation with Ishmael*

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The Promise is Fulfilled (*Genesis 21:1-7*)

- How old was Abraham when Isaac was born? = Circumcised at 8 days as God commanded (Gen 17:12)
- Genesis 21:1-5 = Abraham was 100 when God fulfilled promise to Sarah
- Was this really a big deal since they lived longer back then (Abraham died at 175)?
- Hebrews 11:11-12 = Abraham was past age & as good as dead; Sarah was barren
- Why was this child named Isaac (he laughs)? = Name reminded them of their doubting faith
- Genesis 17:17; 18:12-15 = Abraham and Sarah laughed at God's idea of having Isaac in old age
- How was the emphasis of this name changed when Isaac was born?
- Genesis 21:6-7 = God brought this laughter and joy, everyone will laugh & rejoice with Sarah

The Promise is Threatened (*Genesis 21:8-13*)

- With the Child of the Covenant now born, how was the promise still threatened?
- Genesis 21:8-10 = Abraham had a teenage son, Ishmael, who had first-born rights
- Did Abraham agree with Sarah's concern and request? = Abraham loved his son Ishmael
- Genesis 21:11 = *The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son*
- How did he decide what to do? = God would protect & bless Ishmael for Abraham's sake
- Genesis 21:12-13 = He looked to God for guidance; God told him to do it

The Promise is Protected (*Genesis 21:14-21; 25:12-18*)

- What did Abraham do to guarantee that Isaac would inherit his blessings? = Obeyed God immediately
- Genesis 21:14 = He sent Hagar & Ishmael away – *early the next morning*
- Did God protect Ishmael as He had promised? = Ishmael upset over rejection by his father
- Genesis 21:15-21 = Yes, Arabs are his descendants
- Do we know any more about what happened to Ishmael?
- Genesis 25:7-9, 16-18 (7-18) = Yes, helped bury Abraham, had 12 sons who grew into 12 tribes
- What is one story where we see Ishmael's descendants interacting with Isaac's descendants?
- Genesis 37:23-27 = Jacob's sons sold their brother Joseph to a caravan of Ishmaelites

Sacrifice the Covenant? (*Genesis 22:1-2*)

- Now that God met the first part of His promise, what did He ask of Abraham?
- Genesis 22:1-2 = Sacrifice Isaac - His only son (Ishmael gone) and THE covenant child
- What is a sacrifice? = Write responses on board
- Funk & Wagnalls = Giving up some cherished object or person for the sake of something else*
- What did God say to remind Abraham of what he would be sacrificing?
- Genesis 22:2a = *Your only son ... whom you love*
- What had God asked Abram to sacrifice when He first called him?
- Genesis 12:1 = Your country, your people, your home - His past
- What was God effectively asking Abraham to sacrifice now?
- Hebrews 11:17-18 = His only son, child of the covenant - His future

This is Only a Test (*Genesis 22:1*)

- Had God made this command to Abraham because He wanted a human sacrifice?
- Deuteronomy 18:9-10a, 12 = Sacrificing one's child is detestable to God
- Why did He make this unbelievable command?
- Genesis 22:1 = He was testing Abraham

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Why Does God Test? (*James 1:2-4*)

Why does God test His people? = Our faith is refined, purified, strengthened

1 Peter 1:6-7 = Your faith is refined & proved genuine to God's glory

How are we to respond to the difficulties of God's tests?

James 1:2-4 = Consider it pure joy, develop perseverance, become mature & complete

How does perseverance through difficulties make us more *mature, not lacking anything*?

Romans 5:3-5 = Rejoice in your sufferings, our hope is filled by God's love

Why should we rejoice when God tests us or allows hardship in our lives? = He tests because He loves

Hebrews 12:5-7, 11 = Endure hardship as discipline, harvest of righteousness & peace

What is the reward for those who persevere?

James 1:12 = *the crown of life that God has promised*

Does God Tempt? (*James 1:13-17*)

Does God tempt His people to test them?

James 1:13 = No, God does not test with evil

Can temptations lead to growing in maturity and becoming more complete?

James 1:14-15 = No, they lead to sin then death; temptation \neq evil desire \neq sin \neq death

How do we know when we are being tested by God or tempted by Satan?

James 1:16-17 = *Don't be deceived ... every good & perfect gift is from above*

Abraham's Response (*Genesis 22:3-8*)

How long did it take Abraham to decide what to do?

Genesis 22:3a = Early the next morning - Abraham's faith included immediate action

What did Abraham believe would happen in Isaac's sacrifice? = Boy – infant to military age

Genesis 22:3-5 = **We** will worship & **we** will come back (both Abraham & Isaac)

Why did Abraham tell his servants that he would return with Isaac?

Genesis 22:6-8 = Didn't understand, but trusted God to *provide the lamb*

What did Abraham expect to happen?

Hebrews 11:19 = Abraham reasoned that God would raise Isaac from the dead

Faith That Works (*Genesis 22:9-12*)

Did Abraham actually intend to complete the sacrifice?

Genesis 22:9-10 = Yes, he was ready with the knife and began steps to kill Isaac

What did Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac prove?

Genesis 22:11-12 = *Now I know that you fear God* - Proved his great faith

Didn't God know Abraham's faith? Why was this ordeal necessary? = Living faith is active

James 2:21-22 = Abraham's faith was made complete by what he did

How does Abraham's response shed light on Jesus' call to us, His followers?

Matthew 10:37-38 = Love no one or no thing more than Christ

*It's not faith or works.
It's not faith and works.
It's faith that works.*

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God's Response to Abraham's Faithfulness (*Genesis 22:13-19*)

How did God provide the lamb as stated by Abraham's faith in Genesis 22:8?

Genesis 22:13-14 = Ram caught by its horns in a thicket

Notes: Abraham named the place Jehovah Jireh - *The Lord will provide*

Location was near city of Salem - *Peace*

Both names were later combined into the name Jerusalem - *The Lord will provide peace*

How did God respond to Abraham's demonstration of faithfulness?

Genesis 22:15-18 = God restated His covenant; all nations will be blessed

What did God do here that He never repeated with the patriarchs?

Hebrews 6:13-15 = He made an oath, He swore in his own name

Why is it important for us that God did this? = It guarantees our hope in His promises

Hebrews 6:16-19a = We are to be encouraged by this anchor for our souls, firm & secure

Isaac - A Preview of Jesus

Isaac

Genesis 18:12-14

= Isaac's old age birth was a miracle

Genesis 17:19

= God's covenant made thru Isaac

Genesis 22:2

= Isaac was only son

Genesis 22:2

= Isaac, *whom you love*

Genesis 22:2, 2 Chronicles 3:1

= Mt Moriah - Isaac sacrifice, temple sacrifices

Genesis 22:3

= Isaac rode to Jerusalem on donkey

Genesis 22:6

= Isaac carried wood for sacrifice

Genesis 22:9

= Isaac didn't resist, though stronger

Genesis 22:4

= Isaac was saved from death on third day

Genesis 22:13

= Ram was substitute for Isaac

Genesis 22:8

= *God will provide the lamb*

Jesus

Matthew 1:20

Jesus' virgin birth was a miracle

Hebrews 8:6

Jesus is mediator of the new covenant

John 3:16

Jesus was God's only son

Matthew 3:17

Jesus, *whom I love*

Mark 15:22

Jesus sacrificed on Golgotha, hill in Moriah region

John 12:14-15

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey

John 19:17

Jesus carried wood for sacrifice

Luke 22:42

Not my will, but yours be done

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Jesus rose from dead on third day

Romans 4:25

Jesus was substitute for all sinners

John 1:29

Jesus is the Lamb of God

Closing Prayer

Response

1. Do I live my life as a child of slavery or as a child of freedom?
(*Genesis 16:8-12; 17:18-21; 21:9-10; Galatians 4:21-31; Romans 6; 1 Cor. 7:22-23; 1 Peter 2:16*)
2. Do I have the faith of Abraham to recognize God's voice and to obey Him?
(*Genesis 12:1, 4, 7; 13:14-18; 15:1, 9-10; 17:10, 23; 21:11-14; 22:1-3; 1 John 4:1-6; 5:1-5*)
3. Although God will not tempt me, how can I find His help when I am tempted? (*Genesis 4:7; Matthew 4:1-11; 6:13; Luke 22:31-32; 1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:13-17; 2 Peter 2:9; Rev. 3:10*)
4. What would I have trouble sacrificing for God? (*Genesis 4:3-5; 22:1-2, 12; Exodus 20:3; Joshua 24:14-16, 21-24; 1 Samuel 1:10-11, 27-28; Matthew 6:24; 10:37-39; John 21:15-17*)
5. What does it mean to me that I am a child of the covenant? (*Genesis 17:19; 21:12; 22:15-18; Romans 8:9-17; Galatians 3:6-9, 14, 26-29; 4:1-7; Hebrews 9:15; 11:17-19*)