

## **Abraham's Faith and Isaac's Obedience (Genesis 12:1-20)**

### I. Introduction

#### A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. God is Transcendent (Genesis 1:1-31)
2. God is Personal (Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 26:24, and Genesis 28:12-15)
3. God Changed Abram's Name to Abraham (Genesis 17:5)
4. God Tests Those that Come to Him (Genesis 12:1-7)
5. God Tested Abraham, Too (Genesis 12:10-20, Genesis 20:1-18, and Genesis 22:1-14)

**Question:** In what ways can one say that the Lord is transcendent? In what ways can one say that the Lord is personal? How do Genesis 11:31, Genesis 12:4 and Genesis 15:7 show that God those not give up on His people?

#### B. Transcendent – out of human reach

1. He is the Creator of the world.
2. He cannot be contained by human definition.
3. He cannot be analyzed like a thing or object.
4. We can only know about Him to the extent and in the way that He wants us to know about Him.

#### C. Personal – within human grasp

1. He can be experienced in a personal way.
2. He took the initiative to enter into human existence. He could have remained far away from people but instead as chosen to interact with people as individuals.
3. He reveals Himself to people through general revelation with things like nature (Romans 1:20)
4. He reveals Himself to people through His Word.
5. Abraham knew Him as Jehovahjireh (Genesis 22:14).
6. He revealed Himself to Hagar as Jehovah Rohi (Genesis 16:13).

#### D. God took a personal interest in Abraham.

1. He called Abram from Ur to Canaan in Genesis 11:31.
2. But Abram went only as far as Haran and stopped.
  - a. He was probably hindered by his father, Terah, who worshipped idols.
  - b. Abram was not supposed to take Terah with him (Genesis 12:1).
  - c. God called Abram a second time and told him to leave Haran and continue to Canaan (Genesis 12:4).
  - d. He could have cast Abram off and used someone else, but He did not.
3. In Genesis 14:12-24, some kings attacked Sodom and took Lot away with them. ***The perversion of Sodom was evident from Genesis 14:21 and that was the place where Lot had chosen to live.*** Still, Lot was saved (II Peter 2:7) !!!

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4. In Genesis 15:1-7, the Lord reassured Abram concerning His promises from Genesis 12:1-3.
  - a. Abram was becoming impatient about his lack of a son.
  - b. He had tried to make the Lord's promise come true through surrogate sons.
    - 1) Lot – he had rescued Lot because Lot was the closest thing that he had to an heir. ***But Lot was not the promised seed.***
    - 2) In Genesis 15:2, he called Eliezer the steward of his household. ***But Eliezer was not the promised seed!***
    - 3) In Genesis 16:4, he had a son (Ishmael) by Hagar. ***But Ishmael was not the promised seed.***
- E. Abram was like many people.
  1. He had promises from the Lord, and he was trying to make them come true.
  2. ***We can only have perfect peace when we learn to wait on Him.***
  3. Abraham eventually learned to put all of his faith in the Lord, and by so doing, he became a friend of God.
  4. James 2:23 says, “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

**Question:** In Genesis 12:7, what two promises did God make to Abraham? How do those promises affect the way that many individuals interpret the Book of Revelation?

- II. Genesis 12:7 says, “And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, **Unto thy seed will I give this land**: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.”
  - A. The Lord promised Abram a son (“Unto thy seed”).
    1. Abram tried at various times to make Lot, Eliezer, and Ishmael the fulfillment of that promise.
    2. But Isaac was the son that God had promised.
    3. Genesis 17:19 says, “And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and ***thou shalt call his name Isaac***: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his seed after him.”
  - B. The Lord promised Abram land (“will I give this land”).
    1. Abram was cheated by his own nephew when Lot selfishly chose the best land for himself (Genesis 13:6-11).
    2. Abram remained in Canaan, but the Lord promised him all the land that he could see,
    3. Genesis 13:15 says, “For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.”

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- C. Because Isaac literally existed and Canaan literally exists, conservative theologians interpret the Book of Revelation literally.
  - 1. God made promises to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3.
  - 2. Dr. J. Vernon McGee said that the rest of the Bible pertains to the fulfillment of those promises.
- D. Today, the Arabs (descendents of Ishmael) hate the Jews (descendents of Isaac).
  - 1. The Jews claim full ownership to the Promised Land.
  - 2. But the Arabs think that they have the right to full ownership.
  - 3. Their battle will not end until one man brings true peace to the territory.
    - a. Daniel 9:27 says, “**And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week**: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make [it] desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”
    - b. II Thessalonians 2:3 says, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for **[that day shall not come]**, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”
      - 1) The antichrist will rise to power under the banner of peace.
      - 2) But he will destroy those that do not support him (Revelation 6:2-4)

**Question:** What mistake did Abraham make twice?

- III. Abram (Abraham) was far from perfect.
  - A. He made one mistake on two different occasions.
    - 1. In Genesis 12:11-20, Abram passed off his wife to Pharaoh as his sister.
      - a. He shamelessly allowed Pharaoh to take Sarai into his house.
      - b. **But Pharaoh and Sarai did not have a sexual relationship (see Esther 2:8).**
      - c. The Lord afflicted Pharaoh’s house.
      - d. The Lord was providentially protecting Pharaoh from making a big mistake.
    - 2. In Genesis 17:5, God changed Abram’s name to Abraham.
      - a. Abram means “exalted father”.
      - b. Abraham means “father of a multitude”.
    - 3. In Genesis 20:2-7, Abraham lied to King Abimelech just as he had lied to Pharaoh.
      - a. God warned the king in a dream.
      - b. Abraham tried to downplay his lie by saying that Sarah really was his sister.

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- c. Genesis 20:12 says, “And yet indeed [she is] my sister; she [is] the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.”

**Question:** What was the very difficult test of Genesis 22:1-14? How does God show His nature and attributes to humanity? What does God's name, Jehovahjireh, in Genesis 22:14 mean? In Genesis 22:9-10, how is Isaac a type of Christ? What does it take to be a hero of the Faith?

### IV. Abraham passed his most difficult test.

- A. In Genesis 22:1-14, God told him to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to Him.
1. Abraham was faithful to do what the Lord had commanded him.
  2. Abraham knew that God could restore Isaac even if the act was carried out.
  3. Hebrews 11:19 says, “**Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up**, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”
  4. Abraham had finally learned to trust the Lord completely.
- B. The Lord has taken the initiative to reveal Himself to humans.
1. We learn about Him from His names in the Bible.
    - a. In Job 3:23, the name, **El Shaddai**, is used for God to indicate the highness or majestic quality of His character.
    - b. Psalms 23:1 gives us the name for God, **Yahweh Rohi**, the Lord my Shepherd.
    - c. In Joshua 24:19, Joshua described God as holy and jealous (**El Qanno**), implying that a person should refrain from worshipping idols and other strange gods.
    - d. In Exodus 15:22-26, God had led His people to Marah, but they were not able to drink the water. His objective, by making those waters bitter, was to prove the people's allegiance to Him and their faith in Him. At that time, God revealed Himself to Israel as their **Yahweh Rapha**, the God Who would keep them from disease and pestilence if they would hearken unto Him.
    - e. The name, **Jehovahjireh**, appears in Genesis 22:14 and shows God as our provider.
  2. We learn about His comparative attributes (**omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence**) in His Word,
  3. We learn about His absolute attributes (**spirituality, personality, life, infinity, constancy, moral purity, integrity, and love**) in His Word. His absolute attributes are internal to Him.
  4. We learn about Him through experience. Abraham was about to learn an important lesson about God that he had not wished upon himself.
- C. Isaac was a type of Christ.

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1. Abraham loved Isaac, but he was willing to offer him as a sacrifice because he loved God more.
  2. God loves His Son, but He was willing to offer Him as a sacrifice because He loves us.
  3. Isaac was a type of Christ because he shows Christ on the cross, willing to die for us.
- D. How to be a person be a hero of the Faith.
1. **Have Faith in the Lord:** Hebrews 11:6 says, "But *without faith it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
  2. **Go where He leads without question or hesitation:** Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, *moved* with fear, *prepared* an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
  3. **Blind obedience in all things:** Hebrews 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, *obeyed*; and he went out, *not knowing* whither he went."
  4. **Be a person of genuine integrity:** Hebrews 11:24 says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, *refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;"
  5. **Be Christ-centered in all areas of your life:** Of Moses, Hebrews 11:26 says, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

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Next week's lesson: "Abraham was Promised a Seed and some Land" (Genesis 13:14-17)

### Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday:	Genesis 13:5-17
Tuesday:	Genesis 22:1-19
Wednesday:	Matthew 20:20-28
Thursday:	Matthew 22:37-39 and Romans 4:1-3
Friday:	James 2:21-23

### Study questions:

1. How did Lot show his true attitude? What happened to his family and him in the end? Do you believe that Lot was saved?
2. What two promises did the Lord make to Abraham?
3. How does one attain greatness in God's eyes? How would you describe the relationship between holiness and having a servant's attitude?
4. In Matthew 22:37-39, what are the two commandments that Jesus gave to His listeners?
5. What did the Apostle Paul write about Abraham in Romans 4:1-3?
6. What did James write about Abraham in James 2:21-23?