

September 15, 2013

## Lesson 2: Binding of Isaac



### **Genesis 21:1-3,22:1-14**

The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his

son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'



# Binding of Isaac

Genesis 21:1-3; 22:1-14

“So Abraham  
called that place  
‘The Lord will  
Provide’”



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**The Big Story Truth:** God provides! God can be trusted, even when it is hard!

**About this Scripture Passage:** This is one of the harder scripture passages to understand in all of scripture. Before we deal with this particular scripture passage, though, we need a little bit of background. God's good creation was ruined by the entrance of sin into the world (see Genesis 3). So God sets about a rescue plan. The first part of that plan is establishing a relationship with a particular family, a family through whom the Savior (Jesus) will eventually come. God chose a man named Abraham and his wife, Sarah, to be the patriarch and matriarch of this family. There was only one problem, they were well beyond child bearing years and had no children. Yet, God promised that they would one day.... and they did! Sarah became pregnant and had a baby boy named Isaac. Which brings us to

today's story in which God tells Abraham to take his son Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice to God.

Abraham responds obediently and begins the journey with Isaac to the mountain God said to go to. As they are journeying, though, Isaac asks about the sacrifice. Usually a lamb would be taken to be the sacrifice. Abraham replies to his Son that God himself will provide the lamb. This does turn out to be true as God stops Abraham from sacrificing Isaac at the last minute and does indeed provide a lamb.

**Making the Connection:** This story is not only just hard to understand in why God would put Abraham through such a test, but also because it has been used to justify child abuse. Some parents with mental illness have also taken this passage to be the basis by which they have killed their own children. This passage must be handled with care! This passage is never to be read as a justification for violence or harm to children! That is never God's desire!

What is important about this passage is to hear how God kept the promise to Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son. And when Abraham trusted God to provide for that son, God did. God was faithful to the promises he had made and Abraham trusted that completely. Abraham trusted that so much that he was willing to stake everything on that being true.

The connection for our kids and for ourselves in this story is that we too can stake everything on God's faithfulness, that God will provide what we need. We can trust all God's promises and we can trust that God will provide for us! God will help us trust, even when it's hard!

### Where in the World Are We?

The text names a place called Moriah, a three days journey away. At the time when this exchange between God and Abraham is taking place we are in the land of Canaan. We don't know where Moriah is for sure but some scholars have said

that it might be the place that will later become Jerusalem, a place that is reference in other places of scripture as "the mount of Yahweh." The map shows the area of Canaan enlarged with an arrow to the spot in Canaan that might possibly be Moriah (Jerusalem).

### For Your Reflection:

*When have you felt tested by something difficult in your life? How did God provide for you in that time?*

*What questions do you have about this passage? What questions do you anticipate your children might have?*



*Moriah (The place later known as Jerusalem???)*