



## An Adventure of Faith: Walking With Abraham

1. We're into our FINAL week of our study on: **An Adventure of Faith: Walking with Abraham**
  - we've tried to keep the focus of our study not so much on Abraham, but the GOD of Abraham
  - we've learned a lot from Abraham's life, but we're learning more about God and seeing His hand at work through the life of Abraham
2. Last week: **Genesis 20: Your Life Impacts Others** - we saw *how* Abraham made decisions that affected a king (his family and kingdom): Abraham lied again and said Sarah was his sister
  - \* We emphasized 3 things:

### I. Our Sin Can Make It Easy for Others to Sin

- Abraham made it easy for Abimelech to sin – and thankfully, God was involved in the process and kept the king for 'touching' Sarah and sinning against Him!
- a person is never justified in sinning because someone else sins, but the 'influencer' will be accountable for his influence!

### II. Our Choices Can Be a Blessing to Others

- in the end, Abraham did the right thing – he just should have done it a whole lot sooner – but that is part of the spiritual growth process

### III. God Uses Us in Spite of Our Choices

- \* this is all about God's plan – Him being glorified and conforming us to the image of Christ

3. Today our study concluded w/**Genesis 21-22: "A Reality Check: Faith Put to the Test"** - the birth of Isaac, offering up of Isaac

The passages break down into 3 segments:

- 1) **Gen. 21:1-21: God Fulfills His Promise to Abraham**
- 2) **Gen. 21:22-34: God Provides for Abraham**
- 3) **Gen. 22:1-19: God Tests Abraham's Faith**

- that's why we titled this study: *A Reality Check* – it doesn't get any more personal than this – this is where the Adventure of Faith ends (i.e. doing what the Creator commands you to do!)

### I. God Fulfills His Promise– Gen. 21:1-21

#### A. The promised seed is delivered – 21:1-8

- Finally, Sarah gives birth to a son as God promised.
- This is the most *visible* fulfillment of any of the promises so far and also the most *central*
  - > because without a son Abraham could never have (1) a multitude of descendants, (2) inherit the land (no one to give it to) or (3) be a blessing to all the nations (when he died that would be it, but not if had 'seed' to continue the blessing!).

- notice the *repetition* 21:1 (and remember why God ever repeats Himself = *emphasis!*)
  - > 'as He said' – 'as He had promised' – 'which God had spoken'
- God is drawing attention to the theological significance of the event of Isaac's birth.
- basically, the laughing OVER – the doubt is OVER – no more skeptics – IT'S REALITY!
  - > God DID what He SAID He would DO [now, argue with THAT— . . . you can't!]
- even though Abraham was 100 years old (he was 86 when Ishmael was born) and Sarah was 90 – SO . . . God can do whatever He wants to do, and He did – and He is glorified in the process!
- not only does God see to it that the seed arrives, He seeks . . .

#### **B. The protection of Isaac – 21:9-14**

- this was probably connected to the great feast given for Isaac when he was weaned
- The short version: Sarah saw Ishmael '*mocking*' Isaac – remember: Ishmael is about 14 years old – so you've got this teenage being a smart-aleck & making fun of Isaac (probably around the age of 3)
- [Note: I wonder if his behavior reminded her of the time she laughed – back in Gen. 18?]
- Point: Sarah viewed this as a 'threat' to her son – evidently she was right – God told Abraham to listen to his wife! [in the past, he should not have listened, but God agreed this time!]
- so Abraham gets upset, but obeys God [God reminds him of His promise about Ishmael]

#### **C. The provision for Ishmael – 21:15-21**

- Through the pride of Ishmael and the jealousy of Sarah, Ishmael is cut out of the family of Abraham so that Abraham's "*descendants will be named through Isaac*" (21:12)
- Ishmael becomes the forefather of desert tribes as first predicted before his birth (16:12; 17:20).
- IMPORTANT: But though separated from the family of Abraham, neither Hagar nor Ishmael are beyond the mercy of God!
- As she discovered on the first occasion, "the Lord" is the one "who sees me," and this time, too, God answers prayer, providing her with water and reassurance about the future:
  - ❖ "*I shall make him into a great nation*" (21:18)
- And our last glimpse of Hagar shows her loyalty to the customs of the patriarchs:
  - > like them she provides a wife for her son from among her own people.
- So though Ishmael excluded himself and his mother from the blessings associated with Abraham's immediate family . . .they still experienced God's care and protection and even to some extent maintained the godly marriage custom of that household.
- It is to this aspect of the story that Paul refers in Rom 9:7 and in his more extended reference to the role of Hagar and Ishmael in Gal 4:21–31:
  - ❖ **Romans 9: 6 But *it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."* 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.**

- For Paul, the all-important point is that Isaac was born following God's promise and in that respect anticipates the Gentile believers in God's plan
  - > while Ishmael, born through human contrivance, is a forerunner of the Jews who sought salvation through works of the law.
- As a story on its own, this narrative, like many other parts of Genesis, illuminates the mixture of faith and doubt // joy and jealousy // love and hatred that characterizes the human predicament.
- But through it all, **\*God proves Himself DEPENDABLE and GRACIOUS** – He is '*faithful*' in performing his promises to each person – as these verse teach us about God:
  - ❖ **Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;**
  - ❖ **1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**
  - ❖ **1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.**
  - ❖ **1 Peter 4:19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.**

## II. God Provides for Abraham– Gen. 21:22-34

[summarize the covenant between the two and how God's hand is in all this, making provision for Abraham, just as He promised]

- this passage would, at first, seem to be a misplaced little story.
- yet, in reality it **\* Details how a man once feared by Abraham (Abimelech) now comes to fear Abraham.**
- Yahweh's powerful blessing of Abraham is having impact throughout the land – even the pagan are noticing God's blessings!
  - > As a result, Abraham gets more "rights" in the land—possession of the precious commodity of water.

**Point: All threats to the "promise" are seemingly being removed by Yahweh!**

- Ishmael is out of the picture, Abimelech is backed way off and seems to 'get' what is going on here
- . . . .until, *Yahweh*, Himself, proves to be the greatest "*threat*" in chapter 22.

## III. God Tests Abraham's Faith – Gen. 22:1-19 [READ the text!]

**A. Yahweh's command: "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac . . . and offer him there as a burnt offering !"**

\* Talk about the 1<sup>st</sup> principle of stewardship: *God owns everything, we own nothing!*

- Yahweh's "*threat*" is a test to show Abraham has matured through all of the previous threats.
- remember all the things that Abraham saw Yahweh do in conjunction w/His promised word

**Input: What are some of the things God has done in your life (ways He's shown Himself faithful) that give your reason to have faith? [various answers]**

- At this point, when Yahweh now says something to Abraham, he believes it—even to the point of believing Yahweh could do something miraculous *again*

> the writer of Hebrews points this out:

- ❖ **Hebrews 11:17** By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 *it was he* to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

**B. Abraham OBEYS!** [mention 3 days journey – he had time to think/change mind, but didn't!]

- Gone now are Abraham's attempts to work out Yahweh's word in his own understanding
  - > Abraham doesn't have to 'get it ALL' – he simply believes and obeys (this is genuine!)
- this what James was teaching when he wrote:

- ❖ **James 1:22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Q: *What does God do?* He provides once again!

- \* **This is the point of mature faith to which we are all working toward – to BELIEVE and ACT upon our faith!**

***“Never was any gold tried in so hot a fire. Who but Abraham would not have argued with God? Such would have been the thought of a weak heart; but Abraham knew that he had to do with a God, even Jehovah. Faith had taught him not to argue, but to obey. He is sure that what God commands is good; that what he promises cannot be broken. In matters of God, whoever consults with flesh and blood, will never offer up his Isaac to God. – Matthew Henry, Commentary on Genesis.***

- this ought to remind us of another Father who was called upon to sacrifice His Son:

- ❖ **John 3:16** "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.

- except in this case, the process of sacrifice was not stopped – Jesus said, “It is finished”

> the plan of redemption is complete – there is nothing more that can be done to pay the price for man's salvation

[tie all this back to the 'seed' from Gen. 3:15 – to the 'seed' of Abraham – to the 'seed' of Isaac – to the 'seed' of Jacob – to the 'seed' of Christ!]

**Input: In what way is God 'testing' your faith? PCBC's faith? – make the point of the greatness of our God and our need to OBEY and exercise our faith!**

**Input: What have you learned about God and about your faith through this study?**

**Study Notes: An Adventure of Faith: Walking With Abraham**  
*Reality Check: Faith Put to the Test – Genesis 21 & 22*

**Introduction:**

**I. God Fulfills His Promise– Gen. 21:1-21**

A. The promised seed is \_\_\_\_\_ – 21:1-8

B. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Isaac – 21:9-14

C. The \_\_\_\_\_ for Ishmael – 21:15-21

\* God proves Himself \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_!

**II. God Provides for Abraham– Gen. 21:22-34**

\* Details how a man once \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham (Abimelech) now *comes to* \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham.

Point: All \_\_\_\_\_ to the “promise” are seemingly being removed by Yahweh!

**III. God Tests Abraham’s Faith – Gen. 22:1-19**

A. Yahweh’s \_\_\_\_\_: *“Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac . . . and offer him there as a burnt offering !”*

**Input:** What are some of the things God has done in your life (ways He’s shown Himself faithful) that give your reason to have faith?

**B. Abraham \_\_\_\_\_!**

\* This is the point of mature faith to which we are all working toward – to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ upon our faith!

*“Never was any gold tried in so hot a fire. Who but Abraham would not have argued with God? Such would have been the thought of a weak heart; but Abraham knew that he had to do with a God, even Jehovah. Faith had taught him not to argue, but to obey. He is sure that what God commands is good; that what he promises cannot be broken. In matters of God, whoever consults with flesh and blood, will never offer up his Isaac to God. – Matthew Henry, Commentary on Genesis.*

**Input:** In what way is God ‘testing’ your faith? FBC’s faith?

**Input:** What have you learned about God and about your faith through this study?

