

Genesis 22:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Analysis

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him... This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

Historical Context

The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה	אֶבְרָהָם	בְּבֹקֶר	יַחֲבֵשׁ	אֶת	חַמְרָה	וְ
rose up early	And Abraham	in the morning	and saddled	H853	his ass	and took
H7925	H85	H1242	H2280		H2543	H3947

בְּנֵי אָתָּה שְׁנִי גַּעֲרִי יְאַתָּה יְאַתָּה יְאַתָּה יְאַתָּה יְאַתָּה
H853 two of his young men H854 H853 with him and Isaac his son
H8147 H5288 H3327 H1121

וְיִבְקַע	עַל	הָעֵץ	וְיִקְרַם	וְיִלְגַּע	אֵל
and clave	the wood	for the burnt offering	and rose up	H1980	H413
H1234	H6086	H5930	H6965		

וּמְלֹא כָּלָה	לֹא אָמַר	אֲשֶׁר בַּמֶּלֶךְ	וּמְלֹא כָּלָה
unto the place	H834	had told	H0

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:60 (Parallel theme): I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

Matthew 10:37 (Parallel theme): He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

