

Abraham Offers Isaac

God tests Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham obeys, and God provides a ram in Isaac's place.

Genesis 22:1-19

CHARACTERS: Abraham, Isaac, God, The Angel of the Lord

THEMES: Faith, Obedience, God's provision, Foreshadowing Christ

AFTER ALL THE years of waiting, after the miracle of Isaac's birth, God spoke words that must have pierced Abraham's heart like a sword: 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.'

How could this be? Isaac was the promised son, the heir of the covenant, the fulfillment of everything God had said. Yet Abraham did not argue or delay. Early the next morning, he saddled his donkey, took two servants and Isaac, cut wood for the burnt offering, and set out.

On the third day, Abraham saw the place in the distance. 'Stay here with the donkey,' he told his servants. 'The boy and I will go over there and worship, and then we will come back to you.' We—did Abraham believe God would raise Isaac from the dead? The writer of Hebrews says yes.

As they walked together, Isaac spoke: 'Father? The fire and wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?'

Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb, my son.'

When they reached the place, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood, bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar atop the wood. He reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

'Abraham! Abraham!' the angel of the Lord called from heaven. 'Do not lay a hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.'

Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. He sacrificed it instead of his son. He named that place 'The Lord Will Provide.'

God reaffirmed His covenant with Abraham: 'Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'

Centuries later, on a mountain in that same region, God would not spare His own Son, but would give Him up for us all.