



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 25 2023

Scripture Story: Genesis 21:1-5; Genesis 22:1-12.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 13.

God provides



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flashlight

“At the appointed place they built the altar and laid the wood upon it. Then, with trembling voice, Abraham unfolded to his son the divine message. It was with terror and amazement that Isaac learned his fate, but he offered no resistance. He could have escaped his doom, had he chosen to do so; the grief-stricken old man, exhausted with the struggle of those three terrible days, could not have opposed the will of the vigorous youth. But Isaac had been trained from childhood to ready, trusting obedience, and as the purpose of God was opened before him, he yielded a willing submission” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 152).

keytext

“‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘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.’”

(Genesis 22:12, NIV)

what do you think?

Each of the following people made several huge sacrifices to achieve world change, and obey their conscience. List one sacrifice each had to make.

- a. Abraham Lincoln _____.
- b. Esther _____.
- c. Josiah _____.
- d. Ellen White _____.

did you know?

The name Isaac means “he will laugh.” It is the name given to him by his father, Abraham. Laughter was a theme in the birth of Isaac. You may remember that when God told Abraham that Sarah would have a son, he fell facedown with laughter (see Genesis 17:16, 17). When Sarah found out about the promise, she, too, burst out laughing. Isn’t it great to see into the Bible characters’ personalities? However, God didn’t find their laughter at His words funny.

INTO THE STORY

“Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.”

“Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’

“‘Here I am,’ he replied.

“Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.’

“Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two

of his servants and his son Isaac.

When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.’

“Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, ‘Father?’

“‘Yes, my son?’ Abraham replied.

“‘The fire and wood are here,’ Isaac said, ‘but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’

“Abraham answered, ‘God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’

“‘Here I am,’ he replied.

“‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘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.’”

(Genesis 21:1-5; Genesis 22:1-12, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Who are the main actors in this story?

Who are the minor actors in this story, the people who are in the background of the story?

What parts of the story are key to understanding it? (*Underline* them.)

What aspects of the story are new to you? (Place an *arrow* beside them.)

What words in this story help us understand how Ishmael and Hagar might have felt? (Draw a *rectangle* around them.)

What one thing is God saying to you through this story?

What words or phrases most capture the various emotions of this story? (*Circle* them.)

What situation in your life do you feel compares to Abraham's challenge—being 100 years old and having a new baby to rear?

punch lines

“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him” (**James 1:12, NIV**).

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (**Galatians 6:9, NIV**).

“Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will!’ ” (**Matthew 26:39, NIV**).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (**Proverbs 3:5, 6, NIV**).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (**Proverbs 9:10, NIV**).

“Jesus replied, ‘Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and it will be done’ ” (**Matthew 21:21, NIV**).

further insight

“Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p.

80.

“If the love of God is in the heart, it will be manifested in the life.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps*

to Christ, p. 82.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read James 1:12.

In the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson you are asked to list some of the sacrifices made by great men and women of history. *Merriam-Webster's* online dictionary has three definitions for the word "sacrifice." The third definition is striking: "Destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else." When one makes a sacrifice, it is done because one values something else more than the thing they had to sacrifice.

In your own words, explain what Abraham valued more than the life of his young son, Isaac?

Sunday

Read Genesis 22:3.

Read the story of Abraham and Isaac again in the Bible passage for this week. What person has taught you the most about what it means to sacrifice? What have you learned from them?

The phrase "early the next morning" in this verse should make you pause. It hints at a very important part of what it means to be obedient to God. When God asks us to do something—even when it is difficult—we must never hesitate to comply. To do so is to disobey.

Give three reasons Abraham could have used to avoid obeying God:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Monday

Read John 11:17-37.

If you read the *Key Text* for this week's lesson you had to say, "Wow, that was a close one!" In the nick of time, God spoke from heaven and stopped Abraham, providing a ram for the sacrifice.

From today's reading, answer this question: Does God always come right on time? Am I willing to trust God even when He seemingly fails to show up in time to meet my need?

Tuesday

Read John 6:5, 6.

Read the *Flashlight* quotation. Which of the following would best describe what you might have said to your father:
a. "Are you crazy?"
b. "There's no way I'm letting you kill me!"
c. "Give me a few minutes, Dad. I'll go find you a ram."
d. "If this is what God wants, then I'll do it."

God will test us from time to time. From today's reading, what test did God give His disciples? How did they do? Did God give up on them?

Wednesday

Read Matthew 26:39 from the *Punch Lines* section of the lesson.

Jesus was so pained by the sacrifice that lay before Him that the blood came through His pores, quite a rare medical condition. Jesus persevered out of His love for us. Read the other *Punch Lines* for this week and answer the following:

What is promised to those who persevere in trials? _____

If you used your faith you would be able to move: _____

We are to trust God with how much of our hearts? _____

Thursday

Read Mark 8:34.

Obedience to God requires faith, and faith is demonstrated through obedience. God has made several requests of His people. From our

reading today, followers of God must be willing to do something. What is that?

Try this today: Identify one bad habit that you'd like to change—wasting time watching too much TV, swearing, getting too angry, talking back to your parents, procrastination, etc. Write that bad habit down on a piece of paper along with what you want God to do with it. Then pray, asking God for strength to sacrifice this habit for His glory. Find a safe place to burn this prayer request. Start overcoming your bad habit today by doing one thing to change it. (For instance, if anger is your challenge, begin the change by asking a cool-headed adult how they stay calm.)

Friday

Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.

What does Abraham's relationship with Isaac teach you about the kind of relationship God wants to have with you?

What are you willing to do to develop a closer walk with God?

If you want a closer relationship with God, ask Him for it right now.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 13.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URLhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the *Conflict of the Ages* series each year.