

Abraham's spiritual pilgrimage to this point (context & background)

- Promise of a son and start of Abraham's spiritual journey 12:1-9
 - Abram trusts God and obeys by leaving "EVERYTHING" (75 yrs.old)
- Abraham lies about Sarah; the Lord protects her in Egypt 12:10-20
- To settle a dispute with his nephew Lot, Abraham demonstrates his faith in God and love for Lot, by allowing Lot to choose. (13:1-18)
- Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Lot militarily 14:1-24
- God's Covenant with Abraham (15:1-20)
- Sarah & Abraham decide to "help" God (@ 85) – resulting in Ishmael (@86) (Gen 16)
- God acts to consummate his part of the covenant (24 years after his initial promise to Abraham) (Gen 17)
 - God adds a "sign" of the covenant - circumcision (@99). Circumcision was done among the elite castes in Egypt, the highest order of priests, divine warriors, and others who uniquely belong to God. Now all Israel is seen in this relationship. She is a nation of priests (set apart - Holy). Gal 6 physical circumcision foreshadowing true circumcision of the heart.
 - Abram's (exalted father) name changed to Abraham (father of many)
 - Sarai's (nobility) name changed to Sarah (princess looking forward to future kings. Sarah is the only woman in scripture that has her name changed and her age (127) detailed at her death (Gen 23:1)
 - Annunciation of Isaac (Gen 17:1-18:15)
 - On that very day, Abraham acted (Gen 17:23)
- The Lord and two angels visit Abraham. Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Lot in prayer (18:1-33)
- God destroys Sodom & Gomorrah but saves Lot (19:1-38)
- Abraham lies about Sarah; God protects her in foreign place 20:1-18
- Birth of son (Isaac means laughter) Ch 21 – such joy at God giving Abraham and Sarah the impossible. Creating life from barrenness – (Re-creation key theme in Gen. We want to read, "And they lived happily ever after..." Abraham 100/Sarah 90
- Climax of Abraham's spiritual journey (Gen 22) Abraham (115-119?/Isaac 15-19?)

Genesis 22:1-19

God's timing

^{NIV} **Genesis 22:1** Some time later God tested Abraham. (We know, but not Abraham)

He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

God's 3 step directive to Abraham:

Step #1

² Then God said, "Take your son, (general to specific 3X)
your only son,
Isaac, whom you love,

Step #2

go to the region of Moriah.

Step #3 (no explanation given! No Q&A recorded)

Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

All heaven is in a "hush" watching with great anticipation. What is going on and how will Abraham respond. (ref. 1 Peter 1:10-12)

Abraham's response

³ Early the next morning (no hesitation) Abraham got up and saddled 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.

Time: 3 days journey (a lot of time to think)

⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

There are some things that you must do alone. (Can't delegate)

⁵ 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." (This is between God and Abraham. Sarah probably doesn't know and the text seems to indicate that the servants didn't know. Don't have to testify about everything. Some things are between you & God)

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, (teenager) and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

Tender moment

As the two of them went on together, ⁷ 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?"

⁸ Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

And the two of them went on together.

The moment of truth(matter of fact description)

⁹ 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 (the son complies with the father's command) and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

God's response

¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ¹² "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."

God's provision

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. (Substitutionary sacrifice) ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. (Jehovah Jireh)

And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

God's unconditional blessing to Abraham and his seed

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." ¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

7th mention of God's promise to Abraham: Gen 12:2-3; Gen 13:15-17; Gen 15:5; Gen 15:18-21 (Canaan); Gen 17:7-8 (Canaan); Gen 18:17-19; Gen 22: 15-19

Conclusions

This was Abraham's test. Could he trust God even though God apparently was being unjust, unfair, unreasonable and seemingly breaking his covenant with Abraham.

Abraham's mustard seed of faith had now grown into a beautiful tree bearing the fruit of righteousness in God's eyes. The N.T. illumines:

Hebrews 11:17-19 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 *men* even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.

The prophets and the angels of heaven were astonished at God's plan.

1 Peter 1:10-12 ¹⁰ As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful search and inquiry, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which **angels** long to look.

Application

The salvation of a man's soul is an incredible gift from God.

The Psalmist states: **Psalm 49:7-9** ⁷ No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him-- ⁸ the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough-- ⁹ that he should live on forever and not see decay.

The price turned out to be the life of God's only begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16) – near Moriah – Jerusalem. All it takes is a mustard seed of faith to begin the journey, but we can be sure that the authenticity of our faith will be tested along the journey of life.

At some point along the journey, we may encounter a situation or circumstance when it appears that God is unjust, unfair, and unreasonable, apparently breaking his promise to watch over us. At that point, we must choose whom we have believed in.

Gospels: Jesus, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23)

We rightfully give praise to the Son for his sacrifice. Sometimes we forget the sacrifice that God the Father made for our behalf. When we understand, all we can do is stand in awe at his great plan of salvation and incredible love for sinful man.

Reflection: How Deep the Father's Love for Us by Stuart Townsend

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss,
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the chosen One,
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice,
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom
(REPEAT)