

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS 19-22

The city of Sodom had a myriad of evil. Ezekiel 16 provides a complete list of her sins, but among them was a total capitulation to homosexuality. Everyday was Gay Pride Day in Sodom. Here was a city that didn't just tolerate... but legitimized sexual perversion. In fact, today we get the term "sodomy" from "Sodom".

And because of this perversion the city of Sodom was ripe for God's judgment.

In Genesis 18, God and two angels visit Abraham, and promise him Sodom will be spared if just ten righteous citizens are found. Sadly, the search proved futile.

Sodom was wicked beyond repair, and we read about her punishment tonight...

Verse 1, "Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom." When Lot left Abraham, Uncle Abe gave him the option to settle in any direction he chose - but 13:12 says, he "pitched his tent as far as Sodom". Lot moved toward the glitz and glamour of the big city.

Apparently, the pleasure, and convenience, and entertainment, and commerce, and variety, and activity of the world had an attraction on Lot and his family.

Lot starts out pitching his tent as far as Sodom, but when we see him again in 14:12 we're told, Lot "dwelt in Sodom". The lure of the city had sucked him in...

And now we see him "sitting in the gate of Sodom"

Which doesn't just refer to a *site*, but to Lot's *status*. Lot had risen to prominence. He was now a city official.

Note the progression: He starts out *looking toward Sodom* - ends up *living in Sodom*, and finally he's a *leader of Sodom*. He *sees*, then *settles*, then *supports*.

This is how the world sucks us in... Our eyes lead us astray. We set our sites on the pleasures and prestige of this world. Then we settle into a lifestyle bent on obtaining what we see. Finally, we turn our attention to supporting and justifying that lifestyle even when it turns out to be not what it was cracked up to be.

Lot was drawn in *slowly but surely*... Guys the path to Sodom is a gradual slope. It has no sudden turns. A lot of little compromises piled up... Beware.

2 Peter 2:8 says of Lot, "that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds..."

Very little in Genesis indicates that Lot was a righteous man, but Peter says he was. Yet take a righteous man, and put him in wicked surroundings and it takes its toll. The evils of Sodom *tormented* Lot, and eventually *toppled* his family.

Again verse 1, "When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way."

And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." But he insisted strongly..." The reason Lot "insisted strongly" was his knowledge of the city. Each night in Sodom homosexual predators roamed the streets – raping and robbing defenseless strangers.

Lot couldn't bear the thought of two messengers from God being the brunt of such treatment, so he "insisted strongly (and) they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate."

Verse 4, "Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.

And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally." In other words, they want to rape them. A gang of homosexual rapists bang on Lot's door.

"So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!" These men are perverts who want to rape and brutalize innocent visitors, but notice what Lot calls them...

He says in verse 7, "Please, my brethren". Make this world your family and you'll get some unsavory brothers. This shows the totality of Lot's compromise.

Imagine the morals and truth Lot had to ignore – think of the convictions he had overlook - to reach the point where

he would call these perverts... brothers.

And then he suggests, “See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof.” *What in the world is this man thinking to offer his two virgin daughters to be brutalized by a gang of violent, barbaric homosexual beasts?*

There are commentaries that chalk Lot’s offer up to the oriental custom of treating visitors with respect. Or they point to the low view of women before the coming of Christianity. Even with those factors I still can relate to Lot’s thinking.

Lot’s association and compromise with the evils of Sodom has stripped him of any courage he might’ve once had. It confused his loyalties. There is no excuse.

“And they said, “Stand back!” Then they said, “This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.

So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. But the men (the two angels) reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door.” Notice, the blindness itself doesn’t shut down their lust and aggression. You’d think,

once struck with a sudden blindness, the men would stop, and listen to God. Instead they keep groping around in the dark.

Verse 12, “Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here?”

Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city - take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!” But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be *joking*.” What a tragic reaction - but apparently during Lot’s time in Sodom he had lost all credibility.

He’d spent so much time *fitting in* – no one could imagine him *standing up*.

Guys, here’s an important question for you and me. *If we suddenly took a stand for God, and truth, and righteousness, would our friends think we were just joking?*

Verse 15, “When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” And while he lingered...” *Imagine, Lot lingered.*

Sodom is about to be incinerated, and rather than run, Lot lingers... It proves the powerful grip the world can

have on us even in the face of judgment.

And here's God's grace in action, "the men took hold of (Lot's) hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city." God literally pulled him out.

I wonder if every time we're tempted God doesn't grab us by the spirit and pull on us to walk away. To sin we've got shake God off, and continue to linger?

Verse 17, "So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die."

"See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." Lot's time in Sodom cultivated a *fear* rather than a *faith*. Now he's invited to meet with God in the mountains, but Lot prefers the clamor of another city – just smaller.

"And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I

cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar (or "small")." Judgment can't come, until God's people are safe.

That's the way it'll be at the end of the age when Great Tribulation comes upon the earth. *Before judgment comes down the Church will go up.* When the fires of judgment ravage the earth the people of God will be safe and secure in heaven.

Verse 23, "The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar." Lot left Sodom at dawn, but since he lingered, the sun is now high in the sky.

"Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens."

Sodom, and neighboring city, Gomorrah, were located in the Valley of Siddim - which is today the southern shore of the Dead Sea.

Genesis 14:10 tells us, "the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits".

The region is also known for its salt and sulfur. It could be that God sent a lightning bolt which hit a pocket of gas in one of these asphalt pits, then exploded. Gangel and Bramer write, "Large quantities of sulfur and salt were carried red hot into the heavens and, in turn, literally rained fire and brimstone on the cities."

How God did it, we don't know, but the whole valley was burned to a crisp.

Billy Graham once commented, "If God does not judge America He'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah." I think that's true. We're guilty of as much, if

not more, than Sodom. And if God judged Sodom He'll certainly judge the USA.

“So (God) overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But (Lot's) wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” She was *assaulted*. She became a *podium of sodium*.

Mrs. Lot left Sodom, but Sodom didn't leave Mrs. Lot. Her body left, but not her heart. She loved the pleasures and treasures of this world more than the new life God had promised. Apparently she was bitter toward God for having to leave Sodom, and God immortalized her bitterness by turning her into a tower of salt.

And Jesus uses this story as a warning to us – to believers living in the last days. In Luke 17:30 He tells us, “Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.” Don't let the world get its claws in you – you'll miss out on God's best. After you come to Christ, don't look back.

Verse 27, “And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD.”

Abraham went out to spend some time with the Lord.

Recorded from chapters 12 to 22, are over 100

conversations between God and Abraham. Abraham was a man who lived in conversation with his God.

It reminds me of the man who entered a church in California, and saw a pay phone on the wall. It had a sign over it that read, “Calls \$10,000.” When he asked about the expensive phone someone told him, “That’s the hotline to heaven. Pick up that phone and you can talk directly to God. That’s why it’s so expensive.”

As the man traveled across the country he saw similar phones in similar churches always with the sign, “Calls \$10,000.”... until he got to Atlanta...

In Atlanta he walked into a church and saw a pay phone with the sign, “Hotline to God: 25 cents”. He thought, “Wow, just 25 cents.” When he’d found the pastor, he asked him why calls to God were so much cheaper in Atlanta. That’s when the pastor answered him, “Because from Atlanta calls to heaven are local calls.”

Abraham loved to spend time with God. From his tent heaven was a local call.

But this morning, as he’s spending time with God, he notices smoke...

Verse 28, “Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot

had dwelt.”

“Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar.” He must’ve thought that God was about to judge Zoar just as He had judged Sodom.

“And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.” Apparently fear dominated their whole lives. They were called to the mountains, but ended up in a cave.

“Now the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father. So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, “Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.” Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father.” Lot carries with him the tragic distinction of becoming a father and a grandfather at the same time. Incest riddled his family.

It's ironic, wine ends up causing Lot to do to his daughters what he had invited the homosexuals to do to them that infamous night at his house in Sodom.

He lays with his virgin daughters, and ends up getting them pregnant.

Lot may've managed to remain a righteous man living in Sodom, *but his family didn't*. His wife *loved Sodom's possessions*, and looked back with a longing gaze. His daughters *learned Sodom's perversions*, and ended up getting their own father drunk so he would sire their sons. *It proves that compromise with sin brings dire consequences... if not on you immediately, then ultimately on your family!*

Verse 37, **“The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.”**

Down through the centuries, the Moabites and Ammonites end up causing the Israelites a heap of problems. They become idolaters, and end up God's enemies.

Chapter 20, **“And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.”** This was Philistine country.

Verse 2, **“Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.”** *Sound familiar?* This is what he said 25 years earlier to the Pharaoh in chapter 12.

And do you remember Abraham's rationale for this lie? Sarah was so gorgeous he was worried the pagan king would kill him in order to take her as his wife. We were amazed that this was his concern when Sarah was 65 – but now she's 90 years old, and apparently still pretty enough to be desired by an oriental king.

Hey, if only Sarah had left us her secret... or maybe she has... 1 Peter 3 tells us Sarah had “**the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.**” And she was “**submissive to (her) husband, as Sarah obeyed Abraham**” Ladies, spiritual beauty is a timeless beauty – *it never wrinkles*. A submissive spirit is coveted by all men.

It's amazing though, that Abraham repeats the exact same mistake he made over two decades earlier. In between the two mistakes Abraham had grown in his faith - his knowledge of God had increased – but apparently Abraham had never taken the time to restructure his thinking toward his wife and his fears.

So when thrown into the same situation he responds in the exact same way.

This is what happens to believers. We enter a relationship with God, and grow spiritually - then a situation pops up that pressures us for a response, and since we've never retrained our minds, we revert back to the way we use to cope.

We fall into the same trap because we've never transformed our thinking to see our circumstances from God's perspective, and tailor a response pleasing to Him.

We need to follow Ephesians 4:23, “**Be renewed in the**

spirit of your mind.”

“And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."

Just as God did earlier for Abraham, He comes to his rescue...

“But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." I didn't know, Lord. I'm innocent. I was told a lie...

“And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her." God honored his integrity, and kept Abimelech from adultery.

“Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours." Remember it was Abraham who lied to Abimelech.

If God hadn't intervened Abraham would've led them all to sin – yet Abraham gets introduced as *a prophet* - and God promises Abimelech, Abraham will pray for him.

I'm sure Abimelech thought he was the one who ought to pray for Abraham.

Verse 8, “So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very afraid. And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done.” Then Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?” *What were you thinking?*

And Abraham said, “Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.” Sarah was Abraham’s half-sister. This was a half-truth. But guys, “a half-truth, said with the intent to deceive, still makes for a whole lie.”

“And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother." Notice, the whole scheme was premeditated. Rather than truthfulness, lying was their mode of operation.

Twice they’ve tried it now, and both times it’s gotten them in trouble.

Abraham’s lie – like many lies – was generated by fear. God can’t protect me, so I’ll manipulate the truth, and protect myself. Fear can motivate a lying tongue.

Verse 14, "Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him.

And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you."

Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver;" I'm sure he was being a bit sarcastic when he called Abraham her brother.

"Indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked." She'd lied to Abimelech, but he'd showed her kindness.

Verse 17, "So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife."

Chapter 21, "And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken." Guys, God always does just "as He has spoken".

"For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him - whom Sarah bore to him - Isaac." The name means "*he will laugh*".

Remember both Abraham and Sarah laughed at God's promise that a 90 year old Sarah would bear a son. Apparently though, *God always gets the last laugh*.

Picture in your mind a funny site - *you'll laugh*. Here come two silver-haired seniors – Abraham is 100 - they

come out of the maternity ward holding a baby.

It was nothing short of a miracle – and they laughed for joy at the blessing!

And remember 25 years elapsed between the first giving of this promise and its reception. Hey, always expect a delay between the giving and receiving of God's promise. In fact, we're living in that in-between time now... We've been promised heaven and a forever victory, but we're waiting on that promise's fulfillment.

Today it takes faith and patience to endure and inherit God's promises.

Verse 4, "Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him." Remember circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant... It also reminds me of the Boston rabbi. He had something in common with Joe DiMaggio – they both were known as the "*Yankee Clipper*."

"Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me."

She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age." *Who would've thunk it!*

Verse 8, "So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned." Isaac was between 3 and 5 years old.

"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom

she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.” The word implies more than friendly kidding or teasing. Galatians 4:29 says that Ishmael “persecuted” Isaac. He tortured him.

“Therefore (Sarah) said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."

Abraham’s liaison with Hagar was Sarah’s idea. But now she sees Ishmael’s brutal treatment of Isaac, and wants Hagar and Ishmael thrown out on their ear.

Verse 11, “And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.” Understand, Ishmael was 17 years old, and Abraham has been a faithful father. They’d built strong ties. Ishmael was a junior in High School. Abraham had coached him in baseball his whole life. They’d gone fishing and hunting together.

This is hard on Abraham, and he’s not sure he wants to cooperate with Sarah.

“But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed." God assures Abraham He’ll take care of Ishmael. Hagar’s son will become a great nation in his own right.

But the house of Abraham is not big enough for both sons, and Ishmael is the odd man out. Isaac is the promised son... “in Isaac your seed shall be called.”

And what was true of Abraham's household is true of the Middle East today. God has multiplied the Arabs - but the *sod, seed, and salvation* belong to Isaac.

Verse 14, "So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.

And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept." *Rejected, abandoned, left for dead...*

"And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink."

Once again God comes to the aid of Hagar and Ishmael. They were kicked out of Abraham's house, but God didn't abandon them. God loved Ishmael, just as He loves the Arabs today. It's ironic, but according to the New Testament when Arabs embrace Jesus they become a child of Abraham – one of God's chosen people.

Abraham left Ishmael for dead, but Jesus died in

Ishmael's place.

Verse 20, “So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; (located at the center of the Sinai Peninsula) and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.”

Galatians 4 is an intriguing passage. Paul gives the eviction of Ishmael and Hagar a figurative or symbolic application. He uses the story to encourage the Church to kick out the legalists who are persecuting the recipients of grace.

It's a fascinating New Testament use of an Old Testament Scripture.

Verse 22, “And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt.”

Abimelech saw Abraham's wealth and power – and he knew of God's favor on Abraham's life. Remember, he also knew of Abraham's penchant for telling half-truths. He figured Abe could be a future threat, so he seeks to form an alliance.

And Abraham agrees. Verse 24, “And Abraham said, "I

will swear."

Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?" And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there." "*Beersheba*" means "*well of an oath*". Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.

And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days."

Which brings us to chapter 22... after Isaac is born, Abraham *rested* in Beersheba for many days, but now his faith gets *tested* as never before.

Did you hear that Abraham wanted to upgrade his personal computer to Windows XP? Isaac said, "Dad, you can't run Windows XP on your old slow Pentium 2. You

need at least a Pentium 4 processor with a minimum of 512 megabytes of memory in order to multitask effectively with Windows XP!”

But Abraham, a man of faith, calmly replied, “God will provide the RAM!”

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love” God calls Isaac... Abraham’s “only son”. God doesn’t even recognize Ishmael as *a child of Abraham* - let alone *his heir*. This means that among nations Israel has an exclusive relationship with God.

And verse 2 brings hope to us, for if God doesn’t mention Ishmael it’s obvious He’s forgotten Abraham’s lapse of faith, and sin with Hagar. Here’s proof that what God forgives, He forgets. God loved and remember Ishmael, but not the works of the flesh that accompanied his birth. As for God’s plan Isaac was an only son.

Notice also, in verse 2, the word “love”. This is the first time the word appears in the Bible – and it speaks of a Father’s love for his son. Abraham loved Isaac.

But God tells Abraham to take Isaac, “and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

Here’s the ultimate test of faith.

Imagine raising a knife with the intent of slitting the throat of your own son. And what made the command so confusing was that Isaac was heir to God’s promise.

God's command flies in the face of both love and logic - yet Abraham obeyed.

Verse 3, "So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." Notice the phrase, "we will come back to you." Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead.

This is what Hebrews 11:19 tells us. Abraham concluded "that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." Notice this was not only *a test for Abraham*, but it was *a picture for us...*

As Father Abraham traveled 50 miles northeast to Moriah, to offer *His only son* Isaac - God the Father made a trip to the same mountain 2000 years later, to offer *His only Son*, Jesus. Mount Moriah was one of the hills of the city of Jerusalem.

In Abraham's day there was a settlement about halfway up the mountain. This means Abraham probably climbed above that settlement to offer Isaac - at the top of the hill - at a place that would later be called "*Golgotha*" or "*Mount Calvary*".

Abraham offered his son on the exact spot that God would later offer His Son.

If you want to see the cross of Christ from the disciples perspective read the Gospels. To visit the cross from the Son's perspective read Psalm 22. But in Genesis 22 we experience the cross from God the Father's point of view.

Through Abraham we can see the Father's heart on display.

Verse 6, **“So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.”**

Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice and laid it on Isaac. Jesus also carried a piece of wood up the same hill. Jesus carried a Roman cross.

Notice also in verse 3, two men travel with Abraham to offer Isaac. There were two thieves on two crosses that traveled with Jesus on His gruesome journey.

And when do you think Isaac died in the mind of Abraham? It was probably when he left to make the trip. What's intriguing, is that according to verse 4, it took three days to reach Moriah. Thus, from Abraham's perspective, his son rose from the dead on the third day. The same was true for God's Son!

Remember too, both Isaac and Jesus had miraculous births...

Isaac is a fascinating type of Jesus, and Abraham a type of God the Father.

Verse 7, “But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.”

“Then they came to the place of which God had told him.” There was an exact place where God wanted this drama to unfold. I believe it was the spot that would later support Calvary’s cross. “And Abraham built an altar there” Abraham was good at building altars. He built them everywhere he went. He was a worshipper

“and (Abraham) placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.”

Understand, at this point Isaac is a grown man. Jewish commentators suggest Isaac was 30-something at the time of this episode. For an old man like Abraham to bind Isaac to the altar he needed his cooperation.

We all talk about the faith of Abraham, but what about the faith of Isaac?

“And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.”

Try to imagine what’s happening in Abraham at this moment... *His 100 year old heart is pounding. His mind is screaming out “no”. His hand is trembling. Tears are flowing. His emotions are caught between a desire to obey and a love for his son.*

What gives Abraham the strength to stretch out his hand, lift his knife, and do the impossible? *It was faith.*

Faith lifted him above the obstacles... Faith that God would raise Isaac from the dead. Faith that somehow God would work this out.

And guys, it's faith that gives us the strength to pass God's tests in our lives.

Well, just as Abraham is about to plunge the knife into his son's throat, "the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Through faith he'd passed with flying colors.

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide;" In Hebrew, "Jehovah-Jireh", or "God my provider"

As it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

Isaac was not the sinless sacrifice God would ultimately require, thus He stopped the hand of Abraham - but *2000 years later God would not stop His own hand!* Jesus was ultimately the ram that God would provide for the sin of mankind.

Verse 15, "Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By

Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Galatians 3:16 makes a big deal out of the fact that "seed" is singular, not plural. "In your seed - not seeds - all the nations... shall be blessed". Paul says this was a reference to one man – Jesus.

Salvation came through a special descendent of Abraham... Jesus Christ.

Verse 19, "So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother," Here's a great name for brothers, Huz and Buz. "Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. And Bethuel begot Rebekah."

"These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah."