

Come Follow Me: February 14-20

Genesis 18–23

“Is Any Thing Too Hard for the Lord?”

Read and ponder [Genesis 18–23](#), and record your impressions. You can use the ideas in this outline to help you study these chapters, and you may also be inspired to search for other messages in the scriptures that the Lord has specifically for you.

Abraham’s life, filled with events both heartbreaking and heartwarming, is evidence of a truth Abraham learned in a vision—that we are on earth to be proven, “to see if [we] will do all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command” ([Abraham 3:25](#)). Would Abraham himself prove faithful? Would he continue to have faith in God’s promise of a large posterity, even when he and Sarah were still childless in their old age? And once Isaac was born, would Abraham’s faith endure the unthinkable—a command to sacrifice the very son through whom God had promised to fulfill that covenant? Abraham did prove faithful. Abraham trusted God, and God trusted Abraham.

In [Genesis 18–23](#), we find stories from the lives of Abraham and others that can prompt us to think about our own ability to believe God’s promises, to flee wickedness and never look back, and to trust God regardless of the sacrifice.

Abraham—A Model of Faith and Righteousness

(6-1) Introduction

Elder Melvin J. Ballard wrote: “You remember the story of how Abraham’s son came after long years of waiting and was looked upon by his worthy sire, Abraham, as more precious than all his other possessions, yet, in the midst of his rejoicing, Abraham was told to take this only son and offer him as a sacrifice to the Lord. He responded. Can you feel what was in the heart of Abraham on that occasion? You love your son just as Abraham did, perhaps not quite so much, because of the peculiar circumstances, but what do you think was in his heart when he started away from Mother Sarah, and they bade her goodbye? What do you think was in his heart when

he saw Isaac bidding farewell to his mother to take that three days' journey to the appointed place where the sacrifice was to be made? I imagine it was about all Father Abraham could do to keep from showing his great grief and sorrow at that parting, but he and his son trudged along three days toward the appointed place, Isaac carrying the fagots that were to consume the sacrifice. The two travelers rested, finally, at the mountainside, and the men who had accompanied them were told to remain while Abraham and his son started up the hill.

“The boy then said to his father: ‘Why, Father, we have the fagots; we have the fire to burn the sacrifice; but where is the sacrifice?’

“It must have pierced the heart of Father Abraham to hear the trusting and confiding son say: ‘You have forgotten the sacrifice.’ Looking at the youth, his son of promise, the poor father could only say: ‘The Lord will provide.’

“They ascended the mountain, gathered the stones together, and placed the fagots upon them. Then Isaac was bound, hand and foot, kneeling upon the altar. I presume Abraham, like a true father, must have given his son his farewell kiss, his blessing, his love, and his soul must have been drawn out in that hour of agony toward his son who was to die by the hand of his own father. Every step proceeded until the cold steel was drawn, and the hand raised that was to strike the blow to let out the life's blood.” (“The Sacramental Covenant,” *New Era*, Jan. 1976, pp. 9–10.)

Bear in mind that Abraham was saved from a similar fate instigated in wickedness by his own father. As with most people, Abraham must have abhorred human sacrifice. Why would the Lord require such a trial of his faith? What can be learned from the life of Abraham, who was faithful to the end?

Instructions to Students

1. Use Notes and Commentary below to help you as you read and study Genesis 18–23.
2. Complete Points to Ponder as directed by your teacher. (Individual study students should complete all of this section.)

GENESIS CHAPTER 18

Abraham entertains three holy men — They promise that Sarah will have a son — Abraham will command his children to be just — The Lord appears to him — They discuss the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

1 And the LORD ^aappeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three ^amen stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and ^bbowed himself toward the ground,

(6-2) Genesis 18:1–2. Who Visited with Abraham?

“We are not justified in teaching that our Heavenly Father, with other heavenly persons, came down, dusty and weary, and ate with Abraham. This is not taught in the 18th chapter of Genesis. The first verse of that chapter should read as follows: ‘And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre.’ That is a complete thought. The second part of this paragraph has nothing to do with the Lord’s appearing to Abraham ... : ‘And he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him.’ These three men were mortals. They had bodies and were able to eat, to bathe, and sit and rest from their weariness. Not one of these three was the *Lord*.” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:16.)

In the Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 18:23 states definitely that “the angels ... were holy men, and were sent forth after the order of God.”

3 And said, My “Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and “wash your feet, and “brest yourselves under the tree:

5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and “comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye “bcome to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

9 ¶ And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, “Sarah thy wife shall have a “bson. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent door, which *was* behind him.

11 Now Abraham and Sarah *were* “old and well stricken in age; and *it* “bceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being “old also?

13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah “laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am “bold?

14 Is any thing too “hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the “btime of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

(6-3) Genesis 18:9–15. Sarah Laughed within Herself

Sarah’s astonished laughter at the news that she was to conceive and bear a son should not be interpreted as proving her lack of faith. Often in the scriptures the servants of the Lord are astonished beyond belief at the miraculous goodness of the Lord. Moses could not believe that he was capable of being God’s spokesman with the pharaoh and asked that he receive help (see Exodus 4:10–17). Gideon needed dramatic proof that the Lord wanted him to deliver Israel from the Midianites (see Judges 6:11–24). Hezekiah asked for confirmation that Isaiah’s promise of extended life was really of the Lord (see 2 Kings 20:1–11). Zachariah was struck dumb so that he would know that his wife Elizabeth would conceive (see Luke 1:19–20). And when the disciples saw the resurrected Lord for the first time, Luke tells us, “they yet believed not for joy” (Luke 24:41). It was the incredible nature of the news that caused Sarah’s response. And after approximately seventy years of childlessness, who could condemn her temporary inability to believe the joyous promise?

16 ¶ And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

(6-5) Genesis 18:19. “He Will Command His Children ... and They Shall Keep the Way of the Lord”

This verse records one of the keys to Abraham’s righteousness. Not only did he keep the commandments but he taught his household to do so too. Of this fact President Kimball said:

“Abraham’s desire to do God’s will in all things led him to preside over his family in righteousness. Despite all his other responsibilities, he knew that if he failed to teach and exemplify the gospel to his children he would have failed to fulfill the most important stewardship he had received.” (“The Example of Abraham,” *Ensign*, June 1975, p. 5.)

20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

23 ¶ And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am* but dust and ashes:

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of five*? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty’s sake.

30 And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty’s sake.

32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten’s sake.

33 And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

(6-4) [Genesis 18:16–33](#). The Power of a Righteous Life

It is not uncommon to hear a person say, “Can one person really make a difference?” The answer is a definite yes. Alma told the people of Ammonihah that “if it were not for the prayers of the righteous, who are now in the land, that ye would even now be visited with utter destruction” ([Alma 10:22](#)). He then warned them, “If ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand” ([Alma 10:23](#)). Like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, the people of Ammonihah refused to repent or recognize that the few righteous among them were their only protection, so they killed them and cast them out (see [Alma 14:9–11](#); [15:1](#)). Therefore, a short time later the entire city was destroyed (see [Alma 16:1–3, 9–10](#)). The Lord also indicated that the United States would bring judgments upon itself for driving out the Saints (see [D&C 136:34–36](#)).

Ideas for Personal Scripture Study

[Genesis 18:9–14](#); [21:1–7](#)

The Lord fulfills His promises in His own time.

The Lord has made glorious promises to the faithful, but sometimes the circumstances of our lives can cause us to wonder how those promises can possibly be fulfilled. Abraham and Sarah may have felt that way at times. What do you learn from their experiences? It may be helpful to begin your study by reviewing what the Lord had promised Abraham in [Genesis 17:4, 15–22](#). How did Abraham and Sarah react? (see also [Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 17:23](#) [in [Genesis 17:17](#), footnote *b*]; [Genesis 18:9–12](#)). How did the Lord respond to help them have greater faith in His promises? (see [Genesis 18:14](#)). What do you find in these verses that builds your faith? What other experiences—in your life or someone else’s—have strengthened your faith that the Lord will fulfill His promises to you in His own time and way?

See also [Doctrine and Covenants 88:68](#).

[Genesis 18:14](#).

Are there stories from the scriptures, from your family history, or from your own life you could share that have taught you that nothing is too hard for the Lord?

[Genesis 18:16–33](#).

What do we learn about Abraham’s character from these verses? How can we follow his example? (See also [Alma 10:22–23](#).)

GENESIS CHAPTER 19

Lot entertains holy men—The men of Sodom seek to abuse Lot's guests and are smitten with blindness—Lot is sent out of Sodom—The Lord rains brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah—Lot's daughters preserve his seed in the land.

- 1** And there came ^atwo ^bangels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;
- 2** And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and ^awash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.
- 3** And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a ^afeast, and did bake ^bunleavened bread, and they did eat.
- 4** ¶ But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:
- 5** And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may ^aknow them.
- 6** And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,
- 7** And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.
- 8** ^aBehold now, I have two ^bdaughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore ^ccame they under the shadow of my roof.
- 9** And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* came in to ^asojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.
- 10** But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.
- 11** And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with ^ablindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

(6-6) Genesis 19:4–11. Why Did Lot Offer His Daughters to the Wicked Sodomites?

Many scholars have tried to justify Lot's shocking offer of his daughters as substitutes for the men on the basis of the strict laws of hospitality and protection that prevailed in the ancient Middle East. The Joseph Smith Translation, however, records that when Lot refused to allow the men of Sodom to satisfy their evil and depraved desires, they became angry and said, "We will have the men, and thy daughters also." Then the comment is added, "Now this was after the wickedness of Sodom" (JST, Genesis 19:11–12; see also vv. 13–15).

- 12** ¶ And ^athe men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, ^bbring them out of this place:
- 13** For we will destroy this place, because the ^acry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

(6-7) Genesis 19:13. What Was the Wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah?

In the Genesis account it is clear that the people of these two cities had become extremely immoral, engaging in homosexuality and other abuses. But the prophet Ezekiel gave greater

insight when he said, “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.” (Ezekiel 16:49–50.) James said that pure religion was to “visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep [oneself] unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). Sodom and Gomorrah not only had partaken of the filthiness of sexual immorality but had rejected their fellow men in need.

14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, ^aget you ^bout of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that ^cmocked unto his sons in law.

15 ¶ And when the morning arose, then the ^aangels hastened ^bLot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being ^amerciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 ¶ And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; ^alook not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the ^bmountain, lest thou be consumed.

18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:

19 Behold now, thy servant hath found ^agrace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

20 Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (*is it not a little one?*) and my soul shall live.

21 And he said unto him, See, I have ^aaccepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called ^aZoar.

23 ¶ The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24 Then the LORD rained upon ^aSodom and upon ^bGomorrah ^cbrimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 ¶ But his wife ^alooked back from behind him, and she became a ^bpillar of salt.

(6-8) Genesis 19:26. Lot’s Wife and the Pillar of Salt

The account of Lot’s wife being turned into a pillar of salt has puzzled many commentators. Was this event a literal thing, or was it figurative? There are two indications in the scriptures that the phrase “looked back” was an idiomatic way of saying “she turned back” or “returned to Sodom.” When warning the disciples of the destruction which was going to come upon Jerusalem, the Savior warned them to flee without delay, not even going into the house to get their possessions. Jesus said, “And he that is in the field, let him likewise *not return back*. *Remember Lot’s wife*” (Luke 17:31–32; emphasis added). He then admonished them that he who seeks to save his life will lose it, and he who loses his life will find it. Elder Bruce R. McConkie paraphrased those verses in these words:

“Look not back to Sodom and the wealth and luxury you are leaving. Stay not in the burning house, in the hope of salvaging your treasures, lest the flame destroy you; but flee, flee to the mountains.

“Seek temporal things and lose eternal life; sacrifice the things of this life and gain eternal life.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:645.)

The implication is that Lot’s wife started back to Sodom, perhaps to save some possessions, and was caught in the destruction.

In the Doctrine and Covenants is a scripture that uses the same terminology as [Genesis 19:26](#). After warning the Saints to flee spiritual Babylon, which is wickedness, the Lord says, “He that goeth, let him *not look back lest sudden destruction shall come upon him*” ([D&C 133:15](#); emphasis added). Again, the implication is that of a return to wickedness.

Most scholars agree that the most probable site of Sodom is now covered by the southern part of the Dead Sea, a body of water with a high salt content. If Lot’s wife returned to Sodom, she would have been caught in the destruction. Her becoming a pillar of salt could be a figurative way of expressing this outcome.

But whatever it was that happened to Lot’s wife, it is clear that she perished.

- 27 ¶** And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:
28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the ^a“smoke” of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.
29 ¶ 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 the which Lot dwelt.
30 ¶ And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the ^a“mountain”, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.
31 And the ^a“firstborn said” unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:
32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.
34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
35 ^a“And” they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.
36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.
37 And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name ^a“Moab”: the same *is* the father of the ^b“Moabites” unto this day.
38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same *is* the father of the children of ^a“Ammon” unto this day.

(6-9) [Genesis 19:30–38](#). The Sin of Lot’s Daughters

The account of the incestuous seduction of Lot by his two daughters is a shocking one but one which, again, illustrates that the Old Testament records the evils of the people as well as their righteousness. There is no way to justify the wickedness of what the two daughters did, although it may be better understood when it is considered that the daughters may have thought that the whole world had been destroyed in the holocaust that befell Sodom and Gomorrah and that Lot was the only source of children left to them. Moses may have included this account in the record because it shows the beginnings of the Moabites and the Ammonites, two peoples that would play an important role in the history of the people of Israel.

[Genesis 19:12–29](#)

The Lord commands us to flee wickedness.

What lessons do you learn about fleeing wickedness as you read about Lot and his family? For example, what impresses you about what the angels said and did to help Lot and his family escape destruction? (see [Genesis 19:12–17](#)). How does the Lord help you and your family flee or find protection from evil influences in the world?

For more about the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, see [Ezekiel 16:49–50](#) and [Jude 1:7–8](#).

See also [Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 19:9–15](#) (in the Bible appendix).

[Genesis 19:15–17](#).

These verses can help your family members prepare for times when they need to flee from wicked situations. What might some of these situations be? For example, you might have a discussion about inappropriate media or the temptation to gossip. How can we flee from such situations?



Fleeing Sodom and Gomorrah, by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

Genesis 19:26

What did Lot's wife do wrong?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught:

“Apparently, what was wrong with Lot's wife was that she wasn't just *looking* back; in her heart she wanted to *go* back. It would appear that even before she was past the city limits, she was already missing what Sodom and Gomorrah had offered her. ... She did not have faith. She doubted the Lord's ability to give her something better than she already had. ...

“To all [people] of every generation, I call out, ‘Remember Lot's wife’ [[Luke 17:32](#)]. Faith is for the future. Faith builds on the past but never longs to stay there. Faith trusts that God has great things in store for each of us and that Christ truly is the ‘high priest of good things to come’ ([Hebrews 9:11](#))” (“[The Best Is Yet to Be](#),” *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 24, 27).

GENESIS CHAPTER 20

Abimelech desires Sarah, who is preserved by the Lord—Abraham prays for Abimelech, and the Lord blesses him and his household.

1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and ^a[Shur](#), and sojourned in ^b[Gerar](#).

2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister: and ^a[Abimelech](#) king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

3 But ^aGod came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she *is* a man's wife.

4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also "a righteous nation"?

5 Said he not unto me, She *is* my "sister"? and she, even she herself said, He *is* my "brother": in the "integrity" of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

7 Now therefore restore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he shall "pray" for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore *her* not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.

8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.

9 Then ^aAbimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou "done" unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast "done" deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the "fear" of God *is* not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

12 And yet indeed *she is* my "sister"; she *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

13 And it came to pass, when God caused me to "wander" from my father's house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy "kindness" which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother.

14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my "land" *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy "brother" a thousand *pieces* of silver: behold, he *is* to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: thus she was reproved.

17 ¶ So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare *children*.

18 For the LORD had fast "closed" up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

(6-10) Genesis 20:1-18

For more information on why Abraham called Sarah his sister, see [Reading 5-5](#).

GENESIS CHAPTER 21

Sarah bears Isaac—He is circumcised—Hagar and her son are cast out of Abraham's household—The Lord saves Hagar and Ishmael—Abraham and Abimelech deal honorably with each other.

1 And the LORD "visited" Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto ^bSarah as he had spoken.

2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a "son" in his "old" age, at the set "time" of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

6 ¶ And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born *him* a son in his old age.

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned.

9 ¶ And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

12 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he *is* thy seed.

14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave *it* unto Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

16 And she went, and sat her down over against *him* a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against *him*, and lift up her voice, and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*.

18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.

19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

20 And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

22 ¶ And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God *is* with thee in all that thou doest:

23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: *but* according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

24 And Abraham said, I will swear.

25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I *of it*, but to day.

27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.

28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What *mean* these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?

30 And he said, For *these* seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

31 Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they swore both of them.

32 Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

33 ¶ And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.

34 And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

Genesis 21:9–20.

What impresses your family about the way God treated Hagar and Ishmael after Sarah and Abraham cast them out?

GENESIS CHAPTER 22

Abraham is commanded to sacrifice Isaac, his son — Both father and son yield to the will of God — Abraham's seed will be as the stars and the sand in number — In his seed, all nations will be blessed — Rebekah is born to Bethuel.

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*.

(6-12) Genesis 22:1. Did God “Tempt” Abraham?

The word translated as “tempt” in the King James Version comes from the Hebrew word *nissah*, which means “to test, try, or prove.” The test given to Abraham had two aspects. First, he was asked to give up something very precious to him. To kill one’s child would be horrible enough but to kill the child that had come after decades of fruitless waiting, the child promised by holy men sent from God, the child in whom the covenant was to be fulfilled, must have been a test beyond comprehension. The willingness of Abraham to give up something as dear as Isaac sharply contrasts with the reluctance of the rich young ruler who asked the Savior what he must do to be saved. When told he should sell all of his possessions and follow the Master, “he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Matthew 19:22).

But an equally difficult, if not greater, test was what could be described as the question of the integrity of God. Abraham himself had nearly lost his life on an idolatrous altar and had been saved by the direct intervention of the Lord (see Abraham 1:12–20). Abraham knew that the law of God forbids human sacrifice or murder of any sort. Surely one would wonder at such a command, asking himself, “Can this be from God? Does God contradict himself?” And then to know that, additionally, it would mean the end of the very covenant line that God had Himself promised to establish would surely be almost overwhelming.

Elder Spencer W. Kimball commented on this aspect of the test: “Exceeding faith was shown by Abraham when the superhuman test was applied to him. His young ‘child of promise,’ destined to be the father of empires, must now be offered upon the sacrificial altar. It was God’s

command, but it seemed so contradictory! How could his son, Isaac, be the father of an uncountable posterity if in his youth his mortal life was to be terminated? Why should he, Abraham, be called upon to do this revolting deed? It was irreconcilable, impossible! And yet he believed God. His undaunted faith carried him with breaking heart toward the land of Moriah with this young son who little suspected the agonies through which his father must have been passing.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1952, p. 48.)

Little wonder that throughout the scriptures Abraham is spoken of again and again as a great example of one with faith, of one who was obedient.

2 And he said, ^aTake now thy son, thine ^bonly son Isaac, whom thou ^clovest, and get thee into the land of ^dMoriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 ¶ 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 ^awood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and ^aworship, and come again to you.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and ^alaid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, ^aHere am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a ^alamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and ^alaid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the ^baltar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I.

12 And he said, ^aLay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou ^bfearest God, seeing thou hast not ^cwithheld thy son, thine only son from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place ^aJehovah-jireh: as it is said *to* this day, ^bIn the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

15 ¶ And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16 And said, By myself have I ^asworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy ^aseed as the stars of the heaven, and as the ^bsand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the ^cgate of his enemies;

18 And in thy ^aseed shall all the nations of the earth be ^bblessed; because thou hast ^cobeyed my voice.

19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

(6-11) Genesis 22:1–19. The Sacrifice of Isaac—A Similitude

In the Book of Mormon, Jacob clearly teaches that Abraham’s willingness to offer up Isaac is “a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son” (Jacob 4:5). A similitude is an object, act, or event in physical reality which corresponds to (is similar to or is a simulation of) some greater spiritual reality. (For a discussion of why the Lord uses similitudes, see Enrichment Section C, “Symbolism and Typology in the Old Testament.”)

Most readers of the Old Testament can immediately see the similarities between the test of Abraham and the sacrifice of the Father, but many miss the precise detail of this similitude that God used to teach about the future sacrifice of His only Son. The following are some of these significant details.

Abraham obviously was a type or similitude of the Father. Interestingly enough, his name, *Abram*, means “exalted father,” and *Abraham* means “father of a great multitude” (see Genesis 17:5). Both are names appropriate of Heavenly Father.

Isaac was a type of the Son of God. One of the meanings of his name is “he shall rejoice.” Like Jesus, he was the product of a miraculous birth. Isaac’s birth certainly was not as miraculous as the birth of Jesus through Mary, but at age ninety, Sarah too was a woman for whom birth was not possible by all usual standards. Yet, through the intervention of God, she conceived and bore a son. Paul called Isaac the “only begotten son” (Hebrews 11:17) when he referred to this event. The Lord not only asked Abraham to perform the act of similitude of His own future actions but indicated that it had to be in a place specified by Him. This place was Moriah, “upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:2). (Today Mount Moriah is a major hill of Jerusalem.) The site known traditionally as the place where Abraham offered Isaac is now the site of the Dome of the Rock, a beautiful Moslem mosque. A few hundred yards to the north on a higher point of that same hill system is another world-famous site known as Gordon’s Calvary. Its Hebrew name was Golgotha. Not only did Abraham perform the similitude, but he performed it in the same area in which the Father would make the sacrifice of His Son.

When they arrived at Moriah, the Genesis account says, “Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son” (Genesis 22:6). The Joseph Smith Translation, however, reads, “laid it upon his back” (JST, Genesis 22:7). Some have seen in this action a similarity to Christ’s carrying of the cross upon His shoulders on the way to His Crucifixion (see Clarke, *Bible Commentary*, 1:139; John 19:17).

Isaac voluntarily submitted to Abraham. This important parallel is often overlooked. The Old Testament does not give enough detail to indicate exactly how old Isaac was at the time of this event, but it is possible that he was an adult. Immediately following the account of the sacrifice on Mount Moriah is recorded the statement that Sarah died at the age of 127 (see Genesis 23:1). Thus, Isaac would have been 37 at the time of her death. Even if the journey to Moriah had happened several years before Sarah’s death, Isaac could have been in his thirties, as was the Savior at the time of His Crucifixion. Nevertheless, Isaac’s exact age is not really important. What is significant is that Abraham was well over a hundred years old and Isaac was most likely a strong young man who could have put up a fierce resistance had he chosen to do so. In fact, Isaac submitted willingly to what his father intended, just as the Savior would do.

Once the event was over and all ended happily, Abraham named the place *Jehovah-jireh*, which the King James Version translates as “in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen” (Genesis 22:14). Adam Clarke, citing other scholars, said that the proper translation should be “on this mount the Lord shall be seen.” Clarke then concluded: “From this it appears that the sacrifice offered by Abraham was understood to be a *representative* one, and a tradition was kept up that Jehovah should be seen in a sacrificial way on this mount. And this renders ... more than probable ... that Abraham offered Isaac on that *very mountain* on which, in the fulness of time, Jesus suffered.” (*Bible Commentary*, 1:141.) Jesus was sentenced to death within the walls of the Antonia fortress, which was only about a hundred yards from the traditional site of Abraham’s sacrifice. He was put to death at Golgotha, part of the same ridge system as Moriah. Scholars not only have noted the significance of the site for the sacrifice of Jesus Himself but also have pointed out that it related to the site of Solomon’s temple where the sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation took place. “The place of sacrifice points with peculiar clearness [to] Mount Moriah, upon which under the legal economy *all the typical sacrifices were offered to Jehovah*; ... that by this one true sacrifice the shadows of the typical sacrifices might be rendered both real and true” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 1:1:253; emphasis added).

20 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor;
21 Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,
22 And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.
23 And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham’s brother.
24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

Genesis 22:1–19

Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac is a similitude of God and His Son.

We don’t know all the reasons God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice; we do know it was a test of his faith in God (see [Genesis 22:12–19](#)). As you read [Genesis 22:1–19](#), what do you learn from Abraham’s experience? Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son was “a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son” ([Jacob 4:5](#)). As you ponder the similarities between Abraham’s test and God the Father’s offering of His Son as a sacrifice for us, what do you feel for your Heavenly Father?

There are also similarities between Isaac and the Savior. Consider reading [Genesis 22:1–19](#) again, looking for these similarities.

See also “Akedah (The Binding)” (video), ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

[Genesis 22:1–14](#)

How can you help your family see the connection between the story of God commanding Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and the Savior's atoning sacrifice? You could show pictures of Abraham and Isaac and of the Crucifixion (see "[Abraham and Isaac](#)" in *Old Testament Stories*) while family members discuss similarities they see between these events. You could also sing a hymn or song about the Savior's sacrifice, such as "[He Sent His Son](#)" (*Children's Songbook*, 34–35), and look for phrases that describe the Savior's sacrifice. What have we been asked to sacrifice as a family? How have these sacrifices brought us closer to God?

GENESIS CHAPTER 23

Sarah dies and is buried in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham buys from Ephron the Hittite.

1 And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: *these were* the years of the life of Sarah.

2 And Sarah ^adied in Kirjath-arba; the same *is* ^bHebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

(6-13) Genesis 23:1–2. The Greatness of Sarah

It is often noted that Abraham is the father of the faithful and a tremendous example of faith and righteousness. Yet Sarah stood by his side throughout his life, not often in the limelight, but always as a great example of womanhood, faith, and righteousness. The Doctrine and Covenants speaks of the righteous as being the seed of Abraham (see D&C 84:34), but Peter also suggested that righteous women can be called the daughters of Sarah (see 1 Peter 3:1–6, especially v. 6).

3 ¶ And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

4 I am ^aa stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my ^bdead out of my sight.

5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

6 Hear us, my lord: thou *art* ^aa mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, *even* to the children of Heth.

8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,

9 That he may give me the cave of ^aMachpelah, which he hath, which *is* in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you.

10 And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, *even* of all that went in at the ^agate of his city, saying,

11 Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that *is* therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

12 And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.

13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou *wilt give it*, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take *it* of me, and I will bury my dead there.

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,

15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundred “shekels” of silver; what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

16 And Abraham hearkened unto “Ephron”; and Abraham “weighed” to “Ephron” the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current *money* with the merchant.

17 ¶ And the field of “Ephron”, which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field, and the cave which *was* therein, and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the borders round about, were made sure

18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same *is* “Hebron” in the land of Canaan.

20 And the field, and the cave that *is* therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.

Points to Ponder

(6-14) While you ponder the life of Abraham and his marvelous response to the testing of the Lord, remember what the Lord said to the Saints of this dispensation. The Saints in Jackson County had been driven out of their homes into the bitter winter of Missouri. Their suffering was intense and lives were even lost. At that time the Lord spoke to the Saints through Joseph Smith and said: “Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son. For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified.” (D&C 101:4–5.)

A few months earlier He had said: “For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith. And whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name’s sake, shall find it again, even life eternal. Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy. For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me.” (D&C 98:12–15.)

This seems like such a high standard. Why must one be tested and chastened before he can be sanctified? Why can a person not be worthy of God unless he is willing to abide in the covenant even to death? To understand these questions and to gain greater insight into why Abraham had to prove himself, think in the eternal perspective for a moment. Imagine the disastrous consequences of making a person a god who was not perfect in every respect. How would the universe survive if it were controlled by a god who could not withstand even intense pressure? Where would we be now if our God had not been disposed to endure the suffering of seeing His Only Begotten Son go to the cross? If Abraham had failed his test, he would have lost his position. If God the Father had failed the same test there would have been no Atonement and all mankind would have “become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil. . . . And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils . . . to be shut out from the presence of our God.” (2 Nephi 9:8–9.)

As you ponder from this eternal perspective, write a one-page paper entitled “Why Does the Lord Test Us?” As you write this paper, you may wish to consider Ether 12:27; D&C 101:35–38; 122:5–9.

You may also wish to include your thoughts in your journal.

(6-15) Another aspect of Abraham’s test has great significance for us. To understand it we must carefully follow the chain of reasoning given in *Lectures on Faith*, compiled under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, which shows how a person develops faith sufficient to achieve salvation. The major concepts in this chain are as follows:

1. Three kinds of knowledge are necessary if a person is to have faith:

“Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

“First, the idea that he actually exists.

“Secondly, a *correct* idea of his character, perfections, and attributes.

“Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (3:2–5.)

2. The knowledge that one’s life is pleasing to God is critical in the development of faith:

“An actual knowledge to any person, that the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God, is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life. It was this that enabled the ancient saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions, and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing (not believing merely) that they had a more enduring substance. ...

“For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor, and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and even his own life also—counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ—requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God; but actual knowledge, realizing that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God.” (6:25.)

3. The only way a person can know his life pleases God is to be willing to sacrifice whatever God asks of him:

“Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in

sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life." (6:7.)

4. Any reluctance to sacrifice whatever God requires will, to that degree, lessen our ability to have faith in God.

"But those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for whatever may be their belief or their opinion, it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty are there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time; so that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence; and where unshaken confidence is not there faith is weak; and where faith is weak the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them." (6:12.)

Now apply that chain of reasoning to the case of Abraham and answer the following questions.

1. Before the Lord could bless Abraham with absolute faith, what did Abraham have to have?
2. How was Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac related to Abraham's knowledge that his life was pleasing to God?
3. Would you say that Abraham's test was a blessing? In what way?

Note what George Q. Cannon said about why the Lord tested Abraham.

"Why did the Lord ask such things of Abraham? Because, knowing what his future would be and that he would be the father of an innumerable posterity, he was determined to test him. God did not do this for His own sake for He knew by His foreknowledge what Abraham would do; but the purpose was to impress upon Abraham a lesson and to enable him to attain unto knowledge that he could not obtain in any other way. That is why God tries all of us. It is not for His own knowledge for He knows all things beforehand. He knows all your lives and everything you will do. But He tries us for our own good that we may know ourselves; for it is most important that a man should know himself.

"He required Abraham to submit to this trial because He intended to give him glory, exaltation and honor; He intended to make him a king and a priest, to share with Himself the glory, power and dominion which He exercised." (George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth*, 1:113.)

What implications does the testing of Abraham have for you?

Note also the indication of God's knowledge of Abraham's good character (see Genesis 18:17–19) long before the test. What does His foreknowledge of Abraham have to do with His knowledge of you?

For more ideas for teaching children, see [this week's outline](#) in *Come, Follow Me—For Primary*.

Suggested song: "[God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son](#)," *Hymns*, no. 187.



Illustration of Abraham and Isaac, by Jeff Ward