

Three Brothers CFM

Come Follow Me: February 14-20

Genesis 18–23

“Is Any Thing Too Hard for the Lord?”

Hello/welcome members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, our names are Ammon, Topher, and Micah and we are “Three Brothers”, welcome to this week’s CFM discussion where we will give you our three favorite insights in under three minutes and then talk about them.

As always we prove all papers for free, follow the links provided to get both our “three insights” papers as well as our “weekly readings” papers totally for free. The three insights paper is what we will be going over in this video, whereas the “weekly readings” is a paper in which we combine this weeks “Come Follow Me” scriptures (which are the words in gold) with the church’s student manuals (which are the words in purple) with obviously the church’s Come Follow Me family program (which are the words in black) into one easy to read document.

Ammon’s Insight #1

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.**

I want to focus on believing in God’s promises.

First, **miracles** worked by the power of the priesthood are always present in the true Church of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon teaches that “God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles” (Mosiah 8:18). **The “means” provided is priesthood power** (see James 5:14–15; D&C 42:43–48), and that power works miracles through faith (see Ether 12:12; Moro. 7:37). (Miracles – June 2001 Ensign Elder Dallin H. Oaks)



Aimy was bitten by a Redback Spider (Australian Black Widow). Was experiencing paralysis, intense pain, stopped breathing briefly and scared me to death.

She was taken to hospital and due to Covid rules I couldn't enter. I gave her a blessing as they wheeled her in and I knew she would be ok.

When I was alone in my car wondering what to do, I was struggling to 'believe Gods promise' (priesthood blessing) and so I prayed vocally for help. Instantly, as I prayed my Sister called and comforted me and then while we were on the phone, my wife sent me a message from her hospital bed saying everything was ok.

I had done everything that I could do, including being as worthy as possible to administer to her in that moment. What I needed to learn was to be more like Father Abraham and stand steadfast in trusting the Lord to keep his side of the promise both now and into the trials to come in the future.

Topher's Insight #1

The Power of righteous parents

Genesis 18:18-19

18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a **great and mighty ^anation**, and all the **^bnations** of the earth shall be **^cblessed in him**?

19 For I **^aknow him**, that he will **^bcommand** his **^cchildren** and his **^dhousehold** after him, and they shall **^ekeep the way of the LORD**, to do **justice** and **^fjudgment**; 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.)

Why did God bless Abraham that he would become a “great and mighty nation”? Because the Lord knew that he would raise his posterity in “the way of the Lord” in righteousness and therefore bless many others.

The Lord also knew that Abraham would act with “Justice and Judgement”. If Abraham doesn’t deal justly then how can the Lord treat him thus? A “Just” man doesn’t fear Justice or Judgement.

Isaac is the perfect example of the product of great parents as he was so humble and subservient to his Father when if he didn’t want to be he could’ve easily ran away or killed Abraham instead of going through with the sacrifice.

Genesis 19:29

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.

The Lord saved Lot and his family for Lot’s sake but also for Abraham’s sake. Even when Lot was being stubborn and slow to follow the angel’s guidance and leave Sodom. The prayers of the faithful parents or relatives count...

So, if we raise our posterity in “the way of the Lord” and act with “Justice and Judgement” we become worthy of the blessings of Abraham AND when our family, friends or posterity are stubborn, slothful or even unrighteous, God will “remember” us and our prayers for them.

Micah’s Insight #1

(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)

Doctrine and Covenant 136:

33 For my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite, and to the condemnation of the ungodly.

34 Thy brethren have rejected you and your testimony, even the nation that has driven you out;

35 And now cometh the day of their calamity, even the days of sorrow, like a woman that is taken in travail; and their sorrow shall be great unless they speedily repent, yea, very speedily.

36 For they killed the prophets, and them that were sent unto them; and they have shed innocent blood, which crieth from the ground against them.

37 Therefore, marvel not at these things, for ye are not yet pure; ye can not yet bear my glory; but ye shall behold it if ye are faithful in keeping all my words that I have given you

Doctrine and Covenants 105:

9 Therefore, in consequence of the transgressions of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion—

10 That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.

11 And this cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high.

12 For behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful and continue in humility before me.

13 Therefore it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season, for the redemption of Zion.

Doctrine and Covenants 105:

2 Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now.

Abraham teaches us the value of a few righteous people... We mustn't forget that Alma the Elder and his group consisted of a few hundred souls, the army of Gideon the same, and the Lord said in 1834 that Zion could have been redeemed even then with the number of Saints then in the church- it wasn't the lack of numbers that was the issue, it was the lack of worthiness. We need to worry less about popularity, the number of members, the number of views we get, the number of subscriptions, etc. for none of those things will bring about the Redemption of Zion and building of New Jerusalem- purity will. We need to be less worried about "getting more" and start getting worried about "being more". If it isn't you, it will be someone else, and if it can be someone else, why not make it you and your family? Can one person really make a difference?" The answer is a definite yes.

Ammon's Insight #2

Can the Kings please leave Abrahams wife alone?? First Pharaoh, now Abimelech... probably others!

- Abraham was roughly 90-100 at the time and I imagine Sarah wasn't too far behind because she was too old for Children. She must have been very special...
- Abraham wouldn't have given Sarah to King Abimelech (would you give your wife willingly to the King if the whole point of telling everyone she was your sister was to preserve your life and stop people claiming her?), so he must have taken her by force.
- This process of the King taking Sarah must have been over quite an extended period of time. Firstly, because the King hadn't 'touched her' and felt that was an accomplishment.

Secondly, because he had taken Sarah the Kings wives and maids were all cursed so that they couldn't conceive... It would take some time to recognize that curse had occurred.

It appears that although the King seemed surprised by the Dream he had in which the Lord chastised him, he had done wrong by taking Sarah unto himself. Luckily, the King understood what needed to be done and rectified the situation. Think again about the Faith of Abraham – his wife is taken and a period of time has passed and he would be thinking that Sarah has become the Kings wife or maid! Put yourself in that position. Are you living in a manner that would give you confidence in the Lords deliverance?

Topher's Insight #2

Lots Wife

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

It never made sense to me that Lot's wife could've given a cursory glance back to Sodom and been punished by turning into a pillar of salt. I'm grateful for the latter-day commentary we have from Apostles that really clarify what this means.

In his talk - The Best Is Yet to Be - **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** teaches us what the sin of Lot's wife was in a number of ways. *On a side note, this talk also covers the topic of Forgiveness really well which has been a popular topic in our circles recently so I'd really recommend everyone go and read or watch the talk which is linked in our insights paper.*

"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. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said, such people know they should have their **primary residence in Zion**, but they still hope to keep a **summer cottage in Babylon**.

It is possible that Lot's wife looked back with **resentment toward the Lord** for what He was asking her to leave behind. We certainly know that Laman and Lemuel were resentful when Lehi and his family were commanded to leave Jerusalem. So it isn't just that she looked back; she looked back *longingly*. In short, her **attachment to the past outweighed her confidence in the future**.

...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)" (**Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** "The Best Is Yet to Be," *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 24, 27) (CFM Manual)

So, the actions of Lot's wife were the opposite of Faith - The very first and basic thing the Lord requires of us. After everything the Lord had done for them, she couldn't move forward with Faith. It's also about being ready and willing to sacrifice and leave everything that the **Lord has blessed us with** when required, without delay and without resentment. As Jesus said in Luke 17:31-32 "And he that is in the

field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife". The only thing I think of when I read this is Zion and the New Jerusalem and being ready and willing to ditch my summer cottage (hopefully we are already trying to do that) and to consecrate everything to the Lord for this great cause.

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.)

Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Where are our hearts? This along with Faith and trust in the Lord is what this all boils down to.

Micah's Insight #2

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? (CFM)

Doctrine and Covenants 82:

10 I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.

Lectures on Faith Lecture 3

And again, the idea that he is a God of truth and cannot lie, is equally as necessary to the exercise of faith in him, as the idea of his unchangeableness. For without the idea that he was a God of truth and could not lie, the confidence necessary to be placed in his word in order to the exercise of faith in him, could not exist. But having the idea that he is not man that he can lie, it gives power to the minds of men to exercise faith in him.

Seeing the Lord fulfill his promises made to his faithful servants increases our knowledge that the Lord is a being who cannot lie:

Enos 1:

6 And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

And once we have that knowledge, that God cannot lie, we can begin to exercise faith in Him unto life

and salvation. Seeing the Lord fulfill His promises to His faithful servants such as Abraham and Sariah in miraculous fashion further increases that knowledge- proving that the Lord will perform a miracle if He needs to, to make sure that every promise He ever made will come true literally. This is where an understanding of what was promised to the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr is crucial to understand as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with our eyes on Zion... I'd encourage every member to sit down and give Joseph Smith Jr's patriarchal blessings a good read! But in closing for this thought, I'd like to read the following quote taken from the church's student manuals, but I replaced the word "Israel" in it with "Joseph Smith Jr."

(17-6) Isaiah 49:4–12. Did the Lord Forget [Joseph Smith], His Chosen [Prophet]?

The Restoration was a long time in coming. During the years of [restoration, Joseph Smith] undoubtedly felt lonely and forsaken by the Lord. Isaiah 49:4–12 shows that loneliness. Verse 4 describes the attitude of [Joseph Smith] somewhat discouraged, yet not completely so: "I have spent my strength ... in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord" (Isaiah 49:4). Nephi spoke of the [Latter-Day Saints] in their cast-off condition as being "a hiss and a byword and ... hated among all nations" (1 Nephi 19:14). Isaiah 49:7 describes that condition: men despise and abhor the Lord's covenant people. But [the church] still has hope: "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I [Joseph Smith] be glorious in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 5). [Joseph Smith] will yet be raised and restored and stand as "a light to the Gentiles" and as a beacon of "salvation unto the end of the earth" (v. 6). "In an acceptable time" God will hear [the righteous remnant in the church,] their cry and "give thee ["my servant," in 1 Nephi 21:8] for a covenant of the people" (Isaiah 49:8). That began with the call of Joseph Smith, [but will not see its completeness until after Joseph Smith returns]."

Ammon's Insight #3

Genesis Ch 18:17-19

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.

The Lord knew the thoughts and intents of Abrahams heart. He had already tested Abraham over the years and knew that he would serve the Lord and raise his Children in righteousness.

Even if we feel that we have done enough to demonstrate our Faith, will the Lord continue to allow us to experience Faith testing trials? – YES! Abraham at this point had not yet faced his greatest trial which was to sacrifice his son.

This process is often what we call ‘Enduring to the End’ and a significant part of that process is making our ‘Calling and election Sure’.

“Righteous followers of Christ can become numbered among the elect who gain the assurance of exaltation. This calling and election begins with repentance and baptism. It becomes complete when they ‘press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end’ (2 Ne. 31:19–20). The scriptures call this process making our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:4–11; D&C 131:5–6)” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Calling and Election,” scriptures.lds.org).

“Joseph Smith taught: ‘After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, **then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, *Son, thou shalt be exalted.* When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter.’ To receive the other Comforter is to have Christ appear to him and to see the visions of eternity. [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 149–51; italics added].**

This is the process that Abraham was going through – living by every word of God and being thoroughly proved until the point in which the ‘visions of eternity’ were before him. This is the same process that allows us to receive the knowledge and mysteries of God like Abraham, Moses, Enoch & Joseph Smith etc. This should be the process we are undergoing and we should be striving to be like Abraham to receive these blessings.

Topher’s Insight #3

Isaacs Sacrifice

Recommended watch – “Akedah (The Binding)” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEwxLO-Z29c>

Watching the video really does a simple and great job of putting into perspective the process and the feelings of Abraham as he went up and prepared to sacrifice Isaac. It’s obviously a crazy story when we read it, but its also really easy to gloss over, but when you visualize it and all the steps that needed to be taken into getting the sacrifice to happen it really opens your eyes to how difficult it would’ve really been. It really helps you focus on the love a Father has for his Son and exactly HOW HARD of a request this would’ve been to Abraham and YET HE OBEYED. His willingness to sacrifice ALL is amazing. His

rightful heir and birthright son and the key to his blessing of posterity was literally moments away from being taken away. There was likely no greater test that could've been placed upon Abraham –AND THIS WAS AFTER EVERYTHING HE HAD ALREADY BEEN THROUGH! Clearly, as the Lord gives you more he tests you more and he also tests you with whether you can sacrifice the things that he has blessed you with because it is by our ability to sacrifice all things for the Lord that we truly show our faithfulness and dedication –this is the sacrifice required of us for Exaltation, which has been said by Joseph Smith.

"You will have all kinds of trials to pass through. And it is quite as necessary for you to be tried as it was for Abraham and other men of God... God will feel after you, and He will take hold of you and **wrench your very heart strings and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for an inheritance in the Celestial kingdom of God**"

-John Taylor recalls the words of Joseph Smith to the Twelve. JS manual page 231"

The Lord wrenched Abraham's heart strings and tested him to the max. He passed the test and proved himself and to this day we call this the Abrahamic test. It is expected that we will all be required to be tested at this level to be worthy of Exaltation for otherwise how can we say we are worthy sit at the table with Abraham in Heaven.

Page full of awesome quotes -

<https://emp.byui.edu/satterfieldb/quotes/All%20Must%20Be%20Tested%20as%20Abraham.html>

Isaac's similarity to The Saviour – Pure. Innocent. Willing to submit to his father. Born of miraculous circumstances. Carried his own wood to the place he would be killed –like Jesus carried his own cross. God sacrificed his only begotten –his only physical son. So also did Abraham. You really get the understanding from that video how humble and pure and willing Isaac was as part of this requirement to be sacrificed. He HAD to be complicit because there is no way Abraham as a 100+ year old guy was going to be able to physically force Isaac to lie down and let it happen. Isaac was humble and willing and trusted his father even to his own death. Just like the Saviour was humble and trusted in his Father even unto his death that he gave willingly.

We can compare Abraham and his willingness to sacrifice the thing that meant most to him in the whole world vs Lot's wife who couldn't bare to even leave her home.

Micah's Insight #3

(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 manual then goes on to explain just how much the precise details of the similitude matched. I would encourage everyone to read the CFM readings papers that we are providing for free to read all of those

specific details with this “type”. But more specifically, I want to commit everyone to really start to understand Old Testament “types/shadows/similitudes/etc.” because if we don’t look for them and try to understand them we will miss out on most of the power of the Old Testament... A couple examples quickly off of the top of my head would include:

1. The Exodus from Egypt as a type for the Redemption and building of New Jerusalem (D&C 103)
2. The “the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb” as a type for the Redemption of Zion (2 Nephi 20)
3. Joseph being sold into Egypt as a type for Joseph Smith Jr and the building of New Jerusalem (Ether 13)

Etc. etc. etc.

Don’t just learn the stories, “liken all the scriptures unto you so that they will be for your benefit”, as many of the prophecies “have been and will yet be fulfilled”.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to this today, we just feel so blessed to be alive in this day, the days in which the Lord will perform His most wonderful works, the days directly before the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior. We are “Zion or Bust!”, or as President Taylor said “the Kingdom of God or nothing! We know The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s church and we are doing everything we can to prepare the world for the Savior’s second coming! If you are interested in learning more, you can check us out on Discord or on Facebook, links always provided below.