

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 22:1-19

Think about your past week. How has God answered prayer or worked in your life? What prayer requests do you have? Write them here. Then take time to pray about your requests and ask him to open your heart for today's study.

Read today's passage. Jot down your initial impressions of the passage.

Here is some context for Genesis 22:1-19.

When Abraham was 75 years old, God promised that Abraham's descendants would become a great nation (Genesis 12). After a dozen years of waiting for a son to carry on his family line, Abraham and Sarah didn't want to wait any longer. They developed a plan for Abraham to sleep with Sarah's servant, Hagar, and they would have a son through Hagar. But this plan backfired when Hagar did become pregnant, and Sarah was jealous and spiteful to Hagar and Hagar's son, Ishmael (Genesis 16).

God repeatedly comes to Abraham and promises that Abraham will have a son with Sarah. Finally, when Abraham is 99, God tells him that he will have a son next year (Genesis 18). And indeed, Sarah does conceive, and Abraham finally has his promised

son at the age of 100. They named their son Isaac, as God commanded. They loved Isaac, and even sent away Hagar and Ishmael because Sarah didn't want Ishmael to have any share in Abraham's inheritance (Genesis 21). Finally, Abraham and Sarah could live in peace to bring up their treasured son, Isaac, whom God had promised and for whom they had waited 25 years.

What are your thoughts about the context? Write some key points here.

Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Then summarize the passage in your own words.

Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions.

What does the passage say about God?

What does the passage say about people?

What does the passage say about God's plan?

What else strikes you about this passage?

Understanding how a passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible is important.

This passage has so many themes that can be seen throughout the rest of the Bible. First, we have the theme of Abraham's descendants becoming a great nation. We've explored this theme in the last several lessons in Genesis. Back in Genesis 12, God

promised that Abraham's descendants would become great nation. This promise was reiterated several times until God finally gave Abraham and Sarah a son. Then, when God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham obeyed. Once Abraham had proven his faith in God, God saved Isaac and again promised to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation. We see this promise fulfilled through the nation of Israel, whose story is recorded throughout the Old Testament and beyond.

Second, we have God as provider for his people. When Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham had faith that God would provide a lamb. And if he didn't, then Abraham believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead (see Hebrews 11:17-19). Either way, Abraham had faith that God would provide life for Isaac due to Abraham's obedience. God confirms his ability to provide over and over again. He provided a way out of slavery for the Israelites. He provided food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness. He provided victory in battle as the Israelites took over the Promised Land. He provided a Son for Mary, a Son who would be the Savior of the world. He provided power for the apostles as they shared the good news of Jesus Christ. And today, he provides a way of salvation, a way to avoid condemnation and separation from God.

Finally, we see a father willing to give up his son for a greater purpose. Abraham knew that God had promised that his descendants would be reckoned through Isaac (Genesis 21:12). He may not have understood God's command to sacrifice this son who had been promised to him for so long. But he trusted God's plan, and he was willing to sacrifice his son for that plan. Later in Scripture, we see another Father willing to sacrifice his Son for God's plan. God himself allowed his own perfect Son to be sacrificed on the cross for a greater plan—a plan that would provide forgiveness and salvation to all who call on his name. Except God had to actually follow through with sacrificing his son. Whereas God provided a lamb as a substitute for Abraham's son, God's son was the only perfect Lamb that could take away the sins of the world.

The next time God asks you to do something that seems really hard and that doesn't make sense, remember, God isn't going to ask you to do something he isn't willing to do. God isn't going to ask you to do something hard and then not give you the faith and the strength to complete the task. He will be with you and provide everything you need to be obedient.

What are your thoughts on how this passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible? Write your thoughts here. If you have any questions, write those as well. You may find answers in future lessons, or you may want to find another Christian that you can ask.

Use the following questions to apply today's Scripture passage to your own life.

How does this passage affect how you view God?

How does this passage affect how you view yourself?

How does this passage affect how you will live your life?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you apply what you learned today.