

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 22:1-19

As a group, share something about your past week. For example, share prayer requests and answers to prayer. Share the best and worst moments of your week (highs and lows). Write prayer requests here. Open with prayer for these requests and for God to open your hearts to this week's study.

Have you ever been asked to do something you really didn't want to do, but you felt that you had to? How did the situation turn out?

Read today's passage. Discuss your initial impressions of the passage. Write any major points here.

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? Discuss the context as a group. Write some key points here.

Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Have someone summarize the passage in their own words, and use this space to record that summary.

Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions as a group. Write notes in the space provided.

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

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.