

**What's the whole point of this chapter?** This is a test of Abraham's faith

**What was God asking Abraham to give up by sacrificing Isaac?** Isaac represented the covenant (Genesis 17) and its promises

*Application:* Has God—or is God now—asking you to give up anything that you would like to hold on to?

**Note:** The trip to Mount Moriah was about fifty miles—about a three-day journey. Imagine what the atmosphere was like as they walked along. Imagine how Abraham must have been feeling. Three days must have felt like an eternity when embarked on such a task.

**How old do you think Isaac was at this time?** Probably late teens or early 20s. We aren't told for sure.

In verse 7 Isaac asks Abraham about the sacrifice, pointing out the other provisions. Do you think he was questioning his aged father's ability to remember to bring everything necessary for the sacrifice? He waited until the two of them were alone to ask. Was that to keep from embarrassing his father in front of the servants? The Bible does not answer these questions. What things do you think might have been going through Isaac's mind at this time?

**What do we know about Isaac?**

- He was strong enough to carry the wood
- Strong enough to have resisted if he had chosen to do so
- Old enough to understand the principle of sacrifice
- Old enough to have a strong, personal faith in God

**What is the significance of Abraham's statement in verse 5: *We will worship and then we will come back to you*? What did Abraham believe?** God would raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:19).

**Isaac didn't resist Abraham's attempt to bind him and place him on the wood pile. What does that say about the relationship between Abraham and Isaac?** They had a special relationship based on trust and love. Abraham must have invested considerable time and effort in being a dad. Isaac was obedient and trusting in his father. He had a submissive heart. Isaac must have had a strong faith in his God—not just his parents' God.

**Note:** Centuries later, when God gave his Son for us, it was on the very mountain where Abraham had offered his sacrifice. We know this from 2 Chronicles 3:1, which identifies Jerusalem with Mount Moriah: "Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David." In Abraham's day, there was no temple on this mountain. In fact, there was not even a city. It was a deserted, barren place. But the fact that this was the place God intended to build His city, and where He intended to have His own Son, Jesus, die, explains why He had Abraham make the three-day journey to get there. God was showing that it was on this mountain (Jerusalem, or Mount Moriah) that He would provide our salvation.

**Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac. What does that say about Abraham?** That he feared God. He would not withhold anything from God—even his promised and long-awaited son.

**What does it mean to fear God?** Not terror of punishment but awe in the face of the holy, all powerful, good and just God. The fear of the Lord is an attitude of humility and the beginning of wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). To fear God means to reverence Him as sovereign, trust Him implicitly and obey Him without question

**Note:** Long after Abraham's time God would establish a complex system of animal sacrifices for the Israelite people to observe. At this point nothing formal had been established (though altars and covenants with slaughtered animals hint at this). All animal sacrifices were a shadow of Jesus' sacrifice—the perfect Lamb of God—which was to come in the future. Not even Abraham's promised son, Isaac, could have filled that role. At this point God provides an animal sacrifice for Abraham to offer—a ram.

**How did God respond to Abraham's willingness?** He confirmed His covenant. And He added "Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17).

**What does this episode on Mount Moriah reveal about our God? What can we expect from Him?** He will test us. He will reward our faith. He sees us and is with us in our most trying times. He provides.

**Application:** What are some ways your faith has been tested? How did you respond?

**In Genesis 4 God punished Cain for killing his brother. Now God seems to be commanding Abraham to do something that He had already forbidden—to kill or murder someone—that goes against His expressed displeasure and His character. Is God contradicting Himself?** This was designed by God to be the ultimate test for Abraham. It had to defy logic. It had to be something that Abraham would resist or not want to do. God did not require him to sacrifice Isaac, only to demonstrate that he was willing to obey. This wasn't a policy statement for all of Israel. It was a unique, one-time situation strictly between God and Abraham.

"Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me" (Genesis 22:15–18). This passage contains the first use of the word *obey* in the Bible.

**Abraham's obedience here was an immediate obedience.** This was apparently a great characteristic of Abraham's life and is undoubtedly an important secret to his spiritual growth. He had learned that there is no substitute for instant obedience and that a postponed obedience is usually no obedience.

**Note:** There are several parallels between this event and the events surrounding the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Abraham represents God the Father, Who, out of love for mankind, gave His only Son as a sacrifice for sinners (John 3:16).
- Isaac is a type of Christ, who submits to the will of His Father.
- Isaac bore the wood as our Lord bore His cross (Genesis 22:6; John 19:17).
- The ram is like Jesus—a sacrificial substitute.
- After three days Abraham received his son back (Hebrews 11:19) and after three days in the grave Jesus arose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:4).