



We Are  
Abraham's  
Seed

The Family *of* Promise

# **We are Abraham's Seed**

**A Study on the life of Abraham in relation to the current day  
Christian**

Class 8 The Binding

Genesis 22

**Allen Thomas 2026**

# Where We Have Been

- Gen 1-11 is the prologue to the rest of Scripture
  - The promise of a seed
  - The result of rebellions
  - God's mishpat (justice) and His tzedakah (righteousness) are working together
- Abram is called to be a blessing
  - Called to leave land, kin, home
  - God will give him nationhood, blessing, a great name
  - Famine produces failure in Egypt
- Abram retraces his steps to the beginning
  - He and Lot separate
  - The promise is restated
  - Power through conquest is refused and the encounter with Melchizedek
- God's promise clarified for the heir
  - Trust (Faith) counted as tzedakah
  - Covenant cutting ceremony
  - Prophecy of exile and return
- The couple renamed and the Heir identified
  - Ishmael is born through natural means
  - New names given to signify new roles
  - The heir will come through Sara
  - A covenant sign of circumcision is given
- God appeared and the promise is Sealed
  - Abraham's extravagant hospitality
  - Commanded to do mishpat and tzedakah
  - Does mishpat with God for Sodom
  - Lot is rescued from Sodom's mishpat
- The Seed has arrived
  - Rebuke by Abimelech
  - Birth of Isaac
  - Banishment of Ishmael
  - Covenant with Abimelech

# Where We Are going

- Lech Lecha #2. (Go Forth...)
- Abraham is tested
- God provides
- The promise is restated

Genesis 22:1–19 tells one of the most powerful scenes in Scripture with only about **250-300** Hebrew word-units (about 160 unique). The author does not use many words, but uses them with immense precision. Repetition, silence, dialogue, and small details carry enormous weight.

(NIV about 494, NASB about 544)

# Christian Interpretation

- The Sacrifice of Isaac
  - Most Bibles have this as the paragraph heading

Justin Martyr (c. 150–160 AD)

- Dialogue with Trypho
  - Reads Isaac carrying the wood as Christ carrying the cross
  - Frames Isaac as a type of Christ's passion
- **As the church became predominantly Gentile, typology expanded from a secondary reflection on Christ into a primary reading strategy, gradually replacing the Bible's long, connected story that forms faith and practice.**
- The NT does not explicitly develop Isaac as a direct sacrificial type of Christ's death the way later Christian preaching often does.
  - The NT overwhelmingly reads Genesis 22 through the lens of Abraham's tested faith

It is not wrong to see Christ in the story, but that must remain a secondary reading that grows out of the narrative rather than replacing the text's primary purpose of forming trust, obedience, and covenant faithfulness.

# Other Echos

Matt 3:17 This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

Gen 22:2 Take, please, your son, your only one, whom you love

Psalms 2:7 You are my son; today I have begotten you

Is 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth *mishpat* (justice) **to the nations**.

- the beloved son
- the Davidic king
- the Spirit-anointed servant

# How images Distort

Most artistic depictions distort the Akedah by portraying Abraham as about to stab Isaac, when ancient sacrificial practice involved cutting the throat; the imagery shifts the story from ritual obedience to dramatic violence and subtly reframes the narrative's meaning.



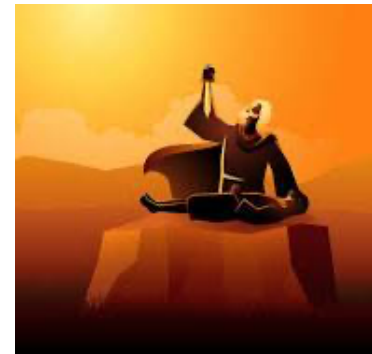
Dura-Europos Synagogue (Syria, c. 244–245 AD)



Caravaggio 1659



Rembrandt van Rijn (1635)





# Intro to the Narrative

22:1 Now after these events it was that God **tested** (*nissah*) Avraham,

This is the lens to the story, without this lens, we miss the main point

God is **TESTING** Abraham

We are able to read the story with information that Abraham does not have

The point of the test is not to give God new information,  
but to make visible within history what had not yet been  
seen

# What is being tested

- Will Abraham act in trust or grasp for his own solution with incomplete revelation?
- Can Abraham remain loyal to God and to Isaac?
- What is God's character especially in relation to the other gods of Canaan?
- Can God maintain the promise in the face of a contradictory command?
- Is Isaac the property of Abraham to do with as he can?

In this chapter, the triangle is not absent, but it is under pressure. The test forces the question of whether Abraham can trust that God will finally hold life, justice, and covenant faithfulness together.

# Go forth again...

22:1 Now after these events it was that God tested Avraham

And said to him:

Avraham!

He said:

**Here I am** (*hineni*). [ I am fully present, attentive, and ready to respond. ]

<sup>2</sup> He said:

**Pray** take **your son**, (natural bond)

Your only-one, (unique status)

Whom you **love**, (emotional bond)

Yitzhak, (specific name)

And **go forth**, yourself, to the land of Moriah (Seeing)

And offer him up there as an offering-up

Upon one of the mountains

**That I will show you** (*say to you - Goldingay*).

## Go you forth

from your land (economic security)

from your family (social security)

from your father's house (future security)

to the land that **I will let you see**

# The Journey

<sup>3</sup> Avraham started **early in the morning**,

He saddled his donkey

He took his two serving lads with him

And Yitzhak **his son**,

**He split wood** for the offering up

And arose

and went

to the place that God had told him of.

<sup>4</sup> On the third day Avraham lifted up his eyes

And saw the place from afar.

<sup>5</sup> Avraham said to his lads:

You stay here with the donkey,

And I and the lad wish to go yonder,

We wish to worship and then return to you.

<sup>6</sup> Avraham took the wood for the offering up,

He placed them upon Yitzhak **his son**,

In his hand he took the fire and the knife.

**Thus the two of them went together as one.**

<sup>7</sup> Yitzhak said to Avraham his father...

He said:

Father!

He said:

Here I am (*hineni*), **my son**.

He said:

Here are the fire and the wood,

But where is the lamb for the offering up?

<sup>8</sup> Avraham said:

God will see to it the lamb for the offering up

**My son**

**Thus the two of them went together as one.**

# The Journey

<sup>3</sup> Avraham started **early in the morning**,

He saddled his donkey

He took his two serving lads with him

And Yitzhak his son,

He split wood for the offering up

And arose and went to the place that God had told him of.

<sup>4</sup> On the third day Avraham lifted up his eyes

And saw the place from afar.

<sup>5</sup> Avraham said to his lads:

You stay here with the donkey,

And I and the lad wish to go yonder,

**We wish to worship (bow down) and then return to you.**

<sup>6</sup> Avraham took the wood for the offering up,

He placed them upon Yitzhak his son,

In his hand he took the fire and the knife.

**Thus the two of them went together as one.**

Genesis 22:5 is the first place where the word worship (*shawkaw*) is explicitly used in this strong sacrificial / God-directed mountain context

Abraham treats worship as reverent surrender and obedience in the face of costly trust.

# The literary design

Thus the two of them went together as one.

<sup>7</sup> Yitzhak said to Avraham his father...

He said: Father (*avi*)!

He said: Here I am (*hineni*), my son.

He said: Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering up?

<sup>8</sup> Avraham said: God will see to it the lamb for the offering up My son

Thus the two of them went together as one.

# ***Hineni - Here I am***

What's going to happen on the top of the mountain? I have no idea. But whatever happens, I am your father, and I am here for you. I can't control who the lamb is. That's up to God. But I can control how I relate to you. I will not distance myself from you. I am present for you, in love, always. Even now.

( D. Forhman - Genesis Parsha Companion)

# The literary design

Thus the two of them went together as one.

<sup>7</sup> Yitzhak said to Avraham his father...

He said: Father (*avi*)!

He said: Here I am (*hineni*), my son.

He said: Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering up?

<sup>8</sup> Avraham said: God will see to it the lamb for the offering up My son

Thus the two of them went together as one.

# The Decision Point

<sup>9</sup>They came to the place that God **had told him of**;

There Avraham built the altar

And arranged the wood

And bound (*'aqad*) Yitzhak **his son**

And placed him on the alter atop the wood.

<sup>10</sup> And Avraham stretched out his hand,

He took the knife to slay **his son**.

- The narrative slows to draw the reader into the moment with Abraham
- The question shifts from *what will happen* to *who Abraham has become*
- Abraham acts deliberately, carefully, and in trust
- The reader is meant to feel the full weight of the moment

# For Now I KNOW

<sup>11</sup> But YHWH's messenger called to him from heaven

And said:

Avraham! Avraham!

He said:

**Here I am!(*hineni*)**

<sup>12</sup> He said:

**Do not** stretch out your hand against the lad,

**Do not** do anything to him!

**For now I know**

That you **fear** God

You have not withheld **your son**

Your only-one

From me.

<sup>13</sup> Avraham lifted up his eyes and saw:

There, a ram caught behind in the thicket by its horns!

Avraham went,

He took the ram

And offered it up as an offering up in place of his son.

<sup>14</sup> Avraham called the name of the place:

**YHWH will see to it**

As the saying is today:

On YHWH's mountain **it will be seen** to. (*there is sight - Alter*)

# The literary design

22:1 Now after these events it was that God tested Avraham

And said to him:

Avraham!

He said:

**Here I am (*hineni*).**

<sup>7</sup>Yitzhak said to Avraham his father...

He said: Father!

He said: **Here I am (*hineni*), my son.**

He said: Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering up?

<sup>8</sup>Avraham said: God will see to it the lamb for the offering up My son

<sup>11</sup> But YHWH's messenger called to him from heaven

And said:

Avraham! Avraham!

He said:

**Here I am!(*hineni*)**

# Another Design

- God calls
- Abraham responds

- Isaac calls
- Abraham responds

---

- Isaac questions
- Abraham assures

- Angel/God calls
- Abraham responds

God will see to it (provide) the lamb  
for the offering up My son

God Tests



<sup>4,13</sup> Avraham lifted up his eyes and saw



God Provides

Avraham called the name of the place:  
YHWH will see to it (God Provides)  
As the saying is today:  
On YHWH's mountain it will be seen to.

# God is Faithful

1 Cor 10:13 No **testing** has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. And **God is faithful**; he will not allow you to be **tested** beyond what you are able, but with the **testing he will also provide** the way through, so that you may be able to endure it.

# For Now I KNOW

- What does God now know?
- What has been proven?
- What kind of God is being revealed here?
- How do we make sense of this narrative today?

# Abraham in his Culture

- In Abraham's cultural world, **human—especially child—sacrifice was known**, though not common, and was typically associated with moments of **extreme crisis** as an act of total devotion to a deity.
- Abraham would not have found it unthinkable that a god might **demand ultimate allegiance**, even at the cost of a child.
- The Akedah therefore tests not only Abraham's obedience, but **his understanding of who YHWH is**.
- YHWH asks Abraham to walk a path that **other gods were believed to demand**, allowing Abraham's assumptions about divine expectation to surface fully.
- At the moment when other gods would have accepted the sacrifice, **YHWH intervenes**, decisively revealing that He is **not a god who desires or accepts human sacrifice**.
- This enacted interruption teaches Abraham something that words alone could not: YHWH is not appeased by the death of children, and covenant loyalty does not require it.
- What Abraham learns through lived experience is later **codified in the Torah**, but the law rests on a truth first revealed through narrative: **this is who YHWH has always been**.

# What God desires

The Akedah does not teach that God wants human sacrifice, but reveals—through the most culturally intelligible means—that YHWH is fundamentally unlike the gods who demanded it.

# The Tree of Knowledge

- Abraham is repeatedly tested on whether he will **trust YHWH** or **grasp for wisdom** in the face of **incomplete revelation**.
- God reveals the promise gradually, allowing Abraham's instinct to **secure the future himself** to surface.
- Told to leave his family and become a great nation, **Abraham takes Lot**, compensating for Sarah's barrenness and the need for an heir.
- Told the heir will come from his own body, **Abraham fathers Ishmael**, acting on partial revelation.
- Told the promise will come through Sarah, **Abraham still acts from fear**, deceiving Abimelech to protect himself.
- Finally, told to offer Isaac—the embodied promise—**Abraham receives no explanation**.

The reader knows this is a test; Abraham does not.

- The decisive question: Will Abraham grasp for wisdom once more—or trust the Promiser to fulfill the promise without seeing how?

**In the Akedah, Abraham no longer seizes control under incomplete revelation; he entrusts the promise back to God—and that act of trust is his tzedakah.**

# Contrast with Eden

- Adam and Eve receive **limited revelation**: a single command—*do not eat*—within a garden of abundance where **every other tree is freely given**.
- The prohibition is not framed as permanent denial, but as a call to **trust God's timing** rather than seize wisdom prematurely.
- Faced with incomplete understanding, they **do not wait**.

They grasp *tov* and *ra* on their own terms in order to secure life and discernment.

- Abraham reenacts this same instinct repeatedly—attempting to secure God's promise through his own wisdom amid partial revelation.
- Over time, God patiently **forms Abraham out of this instinct**, teaching him to stop grasping for resolution and to entrust the future back to God.
- In the Akedah, Abraham finally **refuses to seize wisdom**, choosing trust even when the promise itself appears threatened.
- This trajectory shows that God was never opposed to humanity knowing *tov* and *ra*—only to **taking it apart from trust and before the right time**.
- What was seized prematurely in Eden is **eventually given rightly** through the Torah, within covenant relationship and communal responsibility.

# How we see the Cross

## Core narrative values

- God consistently opposes the attempt to secure life or blessing through death.
- God refuses to advance covenant purposes through **the destruction of innocent human life**
- God reveals this first through narrative *before* codifying it legally

## Therefore, the cross cannot mean:

- God reverting to the logic of human sacrifice that He had already rejected
- God being portrayed as needing the death of an innocent human life in order to be satisfied
- God being portrayed as like the gods Abraham learned YHWH was not

## Instead, within this narrative, the cross must be read as:

- God bearing the covenant cost Himself ( commitment to the covenant of the pieces)
- God exposes false assumptions about sacrifice and reorienting trust toward Himself. (Isaac is not sacrificed, God provides)
- God remaining consistent with the character revealed to Abraham (the God who provides, preserves life, and keeps His promise)

So the question is not whether the cross matters, but what kind of God the cross reveals.

# The teaching of the Binding

If the Akedah teaches us anything, it is that God does not resolve covenant crises by demanding human sacrifice - especially the death of a child. Instead, it **reveals a God who provides life**. That same pattern appears earlier in the covenant of the pieces, where God alone passes through the blood, binding Himself to bear the covenant cost rather than placing it on Abraham. In Scripture, blood is not primarily about appeasing God; it marks covenant, cleanses, and creates sacred space for God to dwell with His people. **Blood prepares the way for divine presence**. The cross continues this same story: not God demanding human sacrifice, but God Himself entering fully into the blood-marked space in order to restore covenant, cleanse sin, and dwell with humanity once again.

Abraham's story introduces a God who bears the covenant cost; Exodus and Leviticus will show how that same God makes space to dwell with His people.

# The Covenant Sealed by an Oath

<sup>15</sup> and **YHWH's messenger called** to Avraham a second time from heaven

<sup>16</sup> And said:

**By myself I swear**

declared **YHWH**

Indeed, because you have done this thing

Have not withheld your son

You only-one

<sup>17</sup> indeed, I will bless you, bless you

I will make your seed many, yes many,

Like the stars of the heavens

and like the sand that is on the shore of the sea;

Your seed shall inherit the gate of their enemies,

<sup>18</sup> **all the nations of the earth shall find blessing through your seed**

On the heel of **your hearkening (*shema*) to my voice.**

<sup>19</sup> Avraham returned to his lads,

They arose and went together as one to Be'er-Sheva.

And Avraham stayed in Be'er-Sheva.

# Takeaways

- Trust God even when you cannot yet see the ending.
- Do not grasp for control where God is asking for faith.
- Hold God's gifts with gratitude, but not possession.
- Walk forward believing that God will see to it.

The background of the slide is a dark night sky filled with numerous small stars. Several prominent stars have bright blue and white starburst effects. At the bottom of the image, there is a dark silhouette of a forest or a line of trees.

We Are  
Abraham's  
Seed

The Family *of* Promise

## **We Are Abraham's Seed**

### **Class 8 - The Binding - *Akedah* (Genesis 22)**

#### **Where we are in the story**

Genesis 22 comes after Abraham has already learned, stumbled, grasped, feared, failed, and been restored. The promised son has arrived, Ishmael has been sent away, and the covenant line now appears secure. At this very point, God tests Abraham, bringing the promise itself to the brink so that Abraham must finally trust the Promiser rather than manage the promise.

#### **Where we are going today**

- Genesis 22 is a test of trust under incomplete revelation.
- The repeated language of hineni, 'the two of them went together,' and 'God will see to it.'
- What the Akedah reveals about the character of YHWH in contrast to the gods of the nations.
- How Abraham's long struggle with grasping reaches a decisive turning point in this chapter.

#### **Genesis 22:1-2 - The test**

The narrator gives the lens before the story unfolds: 'God tested Abraham.' The reader knows this is a test, but Abraham does not. That matters. The chapter is not asking us to admire blind violence; it is asking what Abraham will do when faced with a direct command, incomplete revelation, and the apparent threat of the promise itself.

#### **What is being tested?**

- Will Abraham trust God without being shown the ending?
- Will he relinquish what he loves instead of grasping for control?
- Will he let the promise remain God's promise rather than something he must secure himself?
- Will he learn that YHWH is not like the gods who finally demand the death of sons?

#### **Go forth again - a familiar Abrahamic pattern**

The command to 'go forth' echoes Abraham's first call. Once again he is told to walk toward a place God will show him. The pattern is familiar: God does not hand Abraham the whole map at once. He calls him to walk in trust. What begins as 'the place I will show you' becomes, in time, 'the place God had told him of.'

## **Hineni - Here I am**

Hineni means more than 'I am over here.' It is the language of presence, attentiveness, and readiness. Abraham says it to God. He says it again to Isaac. That keeps Abraham from becoming a cold instrument in the story. Even under the test, he remains present - before God and before his son.

## **What God reveals about himself**

In Abraham's world, human sacrifice was known as an act of total devotion in moments of extreme crisis. That is what makes the outcome of the Akedah so important. At the very point where other gods would accept the offering, YHWH intervenes and provides. The test is severe, but the ending reveals God's character: this is not a god who desires the death of children.

## **YHWH will see to it (Provide)**

The chapter's center of gravity is not merely that Abraham obeyed, but that God provided. The ram is given, the son is spared, and Abraham names the place 'YHWH will see to it.' The God who tests is also the God who provides within the test. The promise is brought to the edge and yet preserved intact.

## **The promise after the test**

After the test, the oath of blessing is restated with new force. The seed has symbolically come to the brink of death and returned. From this point on, the promise appears resilient. Abraham has not secured it by his own wisdom; God has preserved it by faithfulness.

## **For our own walk**

- Trust God even when you cannot yet see the ending.
- Do not grasp for control where God is asking for faith.
- Hold God's gifts with gratitude, but not possession.
- Walk forward believing that God will see to it.

## **Key Takeaway**

Genesis 22 shows Abraham learning to trust under incomplete revelation. The Akedah is not a story of God desiring human sacrifice, but of God testing Abraham, revealing his own character, and providing so that the promise may live. Abraham does not secure the future by grasping; he receives it back from the God who sees, knows, and provides.