

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2022: *Genesis*

Lesson 8 “The Promise”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 22; Hebrews 11:17; Leviticus 18:21; John 1:1–3; Romans 5:6–8; Genesis 23–25; Romans 4:1–12.

Memory Text

“Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things” (Genesis 24:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Mount Moriah
- III. God Will Provide
- IV. The Death of Sarah
- V. A Wife for Isaac
- VI. A Wife for Abraham
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. This week, we will follow Abraham from the birth of Isaac through a climactic moment taking him to Mount Moriah to be sacrificed. We will see Sarah die, Abraham arranging the marriage of his son with Rebekah (Genesis 24), and the birth of his two grandsons (25:21–23). Abraham himself gets married to Keturah, who will give him six more sons before the end of his life (25:7–11).
2. “After these things God tested Abraham.” (Genesis 22:1) (Sunday’s lesson) How do you understand this text? How does antecedent reading (reading in the light of what precedes) influence what you see there? Interestingly, none of the previous incidents in Abraham’s life are labeled as a ‘test’. How is this event related to the previous chapter(s)?
3. “God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” (22:8) (Monday’s lesson) What is the significance of these words? How does Abraham

- understand the situation (Hebrews 11:17-19)? How do the words of Jesus in John 8:56 throw another light on the story?
4. What parallels can you see between chapters 21 & 22? What is their significance? After the story of the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael, now Sarah, just like Hagar, learns what it is like to almost lose a child. As often in Genesis, “that which goes around comes around”. Abraham nearly caused the death of the child of Sarah, just as Sarah nearly caused the death of Hagar’s child (21:9-16).
 5. Why is the whole chapter (23) dedicated to the death of Sarah and the buying of a burial plot for her? (Tuesday’s lesson)
 6. The brevity of Sarah’s death notice contrasts with the detail provided for Abraham’s acquisition of a grave. How is that significant within Genesis and the Pentateuch? While Abraham haggles previously (18:22-33), this time he accepts the price – showing that the fulfilment of *giving* the whole land (“from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates”; 15:18) to Abraham’s descendants is still a long way off. Are there any spiritual lessons in that?
 7. Chapter 24 is the longest chapter in Genesis and it is about Isaac’s marriage (Wednesday’s lesson). Abraham leaves open the possibility that the woman will not respond to God’s call. As powerful as He is, God does not force humans to obey Him. Little did Rebekah realize that a small act of kindness would open up an exciting new life for her! By making every occasion a great one, doors may be opened to roles with larger tasks!
 8. Thursday’s lesson is about a wife for Abraham (ch. 25). After Sarah’s death Isaac has taken Rebekah as his wife, which brought him comfort (24:67). Abraham took another wife, Keturah, which brought him six more sons. It took 25 years (and ten chapters) to produce Ishmael and Isaac, while 38 years are succinctly summarized in two verses and another six sons! But finally, Abraham dies and at his burial both Isaac and Ishmael meet (25:9) signifying the complexity of genealogical succession.
 9. What do you do when you’re walking in the darkness and your heart is broken and God seems to be silent and remote, and you do not understand why things are happening the way they are? When Abraham responds to God, “Here I am,” (22:1) he’s not just giving his geographical location. This is a way of offering himself... “I will not run. I will not hide. I am yours. Here I am.” Interestingly, in v. 7 he responds the same way to Isaac, although he would rather run away and not face this awkward situation.
 10. In an ancient world where people feared their gods, a voice told Abraham: “There is a God, and it is possible to be this God’s friend.” And Abraham became God’s friend. This story teaches us what to do, when a little patch, a little advice, a little rest and recreation, saying one more prayer, or one more pat on the back is not enough.
 11. In our day, modern people will sometimes read Genesis 22 and think: Why is this story in the Bible? It’s kind of barbaric. But Abraham lived in a world where human sacrifice was routinely practiced. In his world, that’s what they thought the gods

wanted as an appeasement for human sins. There was no Israel at this point. There was no Torah. There were no sacred Scriptures.

12. God is beginning to introduce Himself through Abraham to the human race. Part of the whole point of this story is that this practice must be stopped. God loves Isaac just as much as He loves Abraham. He loves the child just as much He loves the parent. He loves the whole earth. He loves all children. He loves you and me.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

When God picks a person in the Bible who exemplifies the highest fulfillment of his ambitions for us sinners, when he finally really wins somebody, and he inspires later writers to say, all the way through the Bible, "If you want to know what God wants, look at him." It's Abraham. Over and over, it's Abraham who was what God wanted. And it says of Abraham that he was God's friend. And what was it that made him such a friend? It always says Abraham trusted God. Now, a version may say "believed God." Same word, there's only one word for belief, trust, faith, all the same word. That's why we need the different versions. Abraham trusted God, he really did. And God considered him his friend.

Now evidence that he really trusted God, James says is that he loved cooperating with God and doing what God said. And when God said take your son, sacrifice him; the trust was not, "Well, if you say so God, fine, I'll do it." No, he trusted God enough to say, "God, as I know you that will make sense some day. It surely doesn't now. But I hear you speaking. We've talked so often, I know you wouldn't ask me to do something wrong, or something that will confuse others for eternity, so I'm on my way. But may I reverently ask you why?" And for three days and three nights he asked him why. And he came to a conclusion. God would either resurrect his son or provide a substitute and Hebrews says he was right. He showed he was a friend. And James says see how Abraham, the friend of God, *showed* his trust. He didn't just say, "Sure, I believe in God."

James says the devils do that and it scares them. They're no friends of God. Abraham's trust was the trust of a friend, and a friend shows his friendship in certain, very special ways, like being jealous for your friend's reputation. And when God said I'm going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah Abraham said, "God how could you? As I know you, you wouldn't. I mean, if there were fifty saints there you wouldn't. Forty. Thirty. Forgive me if I seem irreverent, but God, shouldn't the judge of all the earth do what is right?"

They must have been good friends to talk like that. It doesn't say, "And God rebuked him for talking like that and didn't speak to him for a month." No, God says, "Who else knows me that well? I love your jealousy for my reputation. You're right, I wouldn't destroy them if there were

five saints, but I can't find that many." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Three Angels' Messages, #1, recorded October 1981, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MM3ANGELSM>

Lou: In our Bible reference sheet we have the passage regarding Abraham, and James' reference to that. Abraham is referred to as a "man of faith." Couldn't you call it "blind faith" when Abraham set out to obey God—when God said, "Take your son. I want you to bring him and to offer him as a sacrifice?"

Graham: Abraham's relationship with God—why, they were two of the best friends in all history! Abraham knew God well. He had had long experience with God. When God asked him to do things before, it had always worked out well and it made sense. So there was no blind faith on Abraham's part. God asked him to do something that puzzled him a great deal. At the moment he couldn't understand. But he said, "God, if it is you saying it (and I know you so well) I know this will make sense and there will be some solution, so I'm on my way."

This kind of faith is saying, "God, I'm on my way, but may I ask you why?" And so on the way, he asked why. And as he thought it through, he thought, the one who gave me this son miraculously is well able to resurrect my son. Or maybe he will provide a substitute. And Hebrews says he was right. So instead of that being blind faith, I would say he knew God well enough to go—and to know that there would be a solution that would make sense. And so it did.

Lou: But there was in that experience an element of uncertainty. That is to say, how will it work out? There was pain, certainly.

Graham: He wondered.

Lou: Yes. So faith can include that kind of thing.

Graham: Because God is so trustworthy, we are willing to obey him when he asks us to do something beyond our present understanding. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3 with Lou Venden, "All God Asks Is Trust" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the

possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

God gives sufficient evidence to every soul. He does not promise to remove every doubt, but he gives a reason for faith. {RH, January 24, 1899 par. 7}

God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and teachable spirit. All should decide from the weight of evidence. {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 10}

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice, . . . and they follow me” (John 10:27). The Shepherd of Israel does not drive His flock, but He leads them. His attitude is wholly one of invitation. {TMK 52.4}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. “I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” He said, “will draw all unto Me.” {DA 626.1}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, “Follow Me.” But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}