

An abstract graphic on a blue background. It features a series of concentric circles in a darker blue shade, centered around a small white circle. From this center, a series of lines radiate outwards, forming a spiral pattern that expands across the left side of the image.

Abraham

Genesis 11:27-25:11

Bill Ibsen

Genesis

I. Primeval
History Ch. 1-11

Genesis

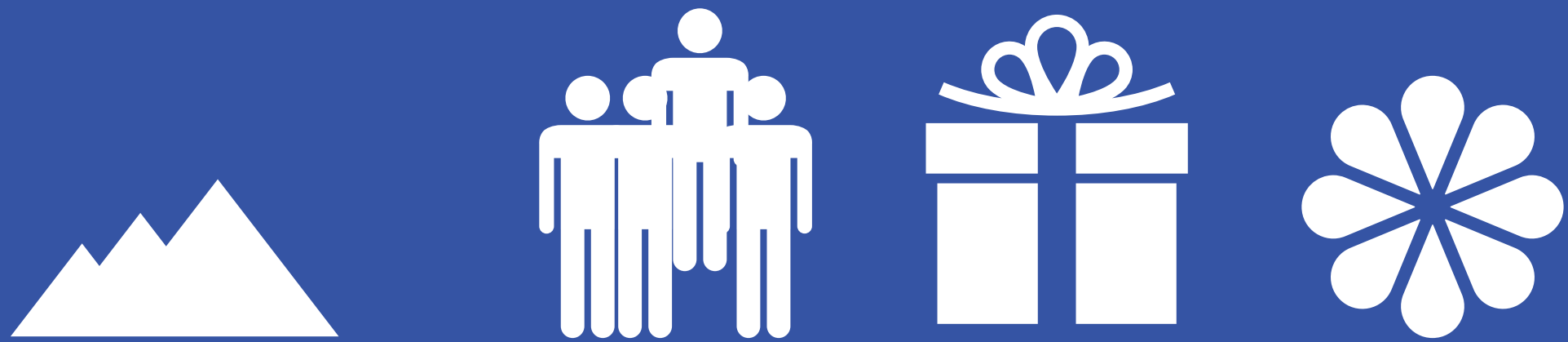
II. Patriarchal
History Ch. 11-50

The *toledot* formula of Genesis' Patriarchal History

11:10–26	Genealogy of Shem	<i>“This is the family history of Shem”</i>
11:27–25:11	Story of Abraham	<i>“This is the family history of Terah”</i>
25:12-18	Genealogy of Ishmael	<i>“This is the family history of Ishmael”</i>
25:19-35:29	Story of Jacob and Esau	<i>“This is the family history of Isaac”</i>
36:1-43	Genealogy of Esau	<i>“This is the family history of Esau”</i>
37:2-50:26	Story of Joseph	<i>“This is the family history of Jacob”</i>

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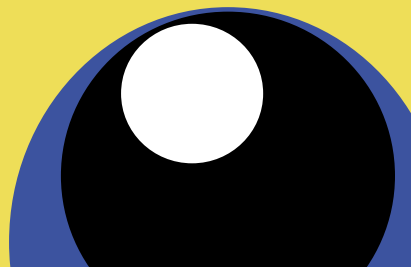


God's Fourfold Promise

Ch. 12-21

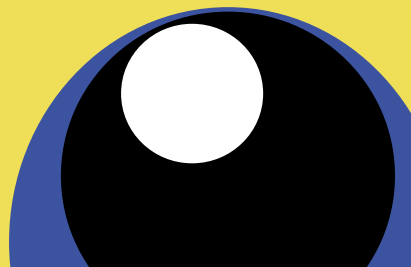
Can Abraham trust?

Can Yahweh be trusted?



Ch. 22

The Testing of Abraham







Ch. 22: What does it mean to fear God?

To walk alone into god-forsakenness?
To discover the Lord as one's worst enemy?





Abraham walked that path successfully
because he feared God

Birth
of Issac

Expulsion
of Hagar &
Ishmael

Treaty
with
Abimelech

¹ Now it came about after these things,

Some time has elapsed

Issac = teenager?

Cushion to listener

God doesn't want human sacrifice

Akedat Yitzchak, "the binding of Isaac"

To the reader: "This is just a test"

that God tested Abraham,

Expelling Hagar and Ishmael

Warring against kings to save Lot

Abduction of Sarah into king's harem (2X)

that God tested Abraham,

Sarah's barrenness + post-menopausal age

Leaving Haran for Canaan

Famine

Love for
God

Torn between his faith in the divine promises

that God tested Abraham,

and the command that promised to nullify them

Love for
his son

Reveals Abraham's deepest emotional attachment

Strains faith and obedience to the utmost degree

Test may seem inexplicable to His people

that God tested Abraham,

God tests His people

Test: quality of our faithfulness

that God tested Abraham,

Unaware of the test

Will he
obey
anyway?

Test seems unreasonable, awful, staggering

that God tested Abraham,

The greatest test in his life; post-receiving promise

Will he give his son back to God through sacrifice?

Demonstrates unparalleled faith of the patriarch

Climax of the life of Abraham

Tension point in the story: Abraham's faith

that God tested Abraham,

Approximately age 113

A speaking God: Adam, Eve, serpent, Noah & sons

and [God] said to him,

“Abraham!”

And he said,

“Here I am.”

Echo's 12:1

Is God hesitating before giving His awful order?

and [God] said to him,

“Abraham!”

And he said,

“Here I am.”

3x

vv. 1, 7, 11

² He said,

“Take now your son,
your only son,
whom you love,
Isaac,

1

2

3

4

Future temple site in Jerusalem; Dome of the Rock

and go to the land of Moriah,
and offer him there as a burnt offering
on one of the mountains
of which I will tell you.”

12:1 “Go forth from your country...to the land
which I will show you...”

Forsaking all and following Jesus (Luke 14:26-27)

Long-awaited son is to be the victim

and offer him there as a burnt offering

God asking him to do something staggering, something that defies rational explanation or understanding.

Commanding child sacrifice: a pagan practice!

No mention of his feelings or thoughts.

Prompt obedience to hard instructions.

³ So Abraham rose early in the morning
and saddled his donkey,

Omission of intermediate dialogue. Obedience.

No negotiating, clarifying, arguing, stalling,
wrestling, fretting, or second-guessing.

and took two of his young men with him
and **Isaac his son;**
and he split wood for the burnt offering,

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

Apparently unquestioning obedience.

“God does not require him to put his son immediately to death, but compels him to revolve this execution in his mind during *three* whole days, that in preparing to sacrifice his son, he may still more severely torture all his own senses”.

- John Calvin

⁴ On the third day Abraham...

His agony was long and drawn out.

⁴ On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.

Somehow Abraham knew this was the place.

Narrator's terse economy of words.

His first words of the journey are enigmatic.

⁵ Abraham said to his young men,
“Stay here with the donkey,
and I and the lad will go over there;
and we will worship and return to you.”

A lie?

An
expression
of hope?

An
affirmation
of faith?

The burnt offering carried the wood to be burned.

⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife.

The Sacrificer carried the fire and the instrument of death.

So the two of them walked on together.

Suggests their isolation and companionship.

Oppressive silence.

The boy breaks the oppressive silence.

⁷ Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said,
“My father!”

And he said,

“Here I am, my son.”

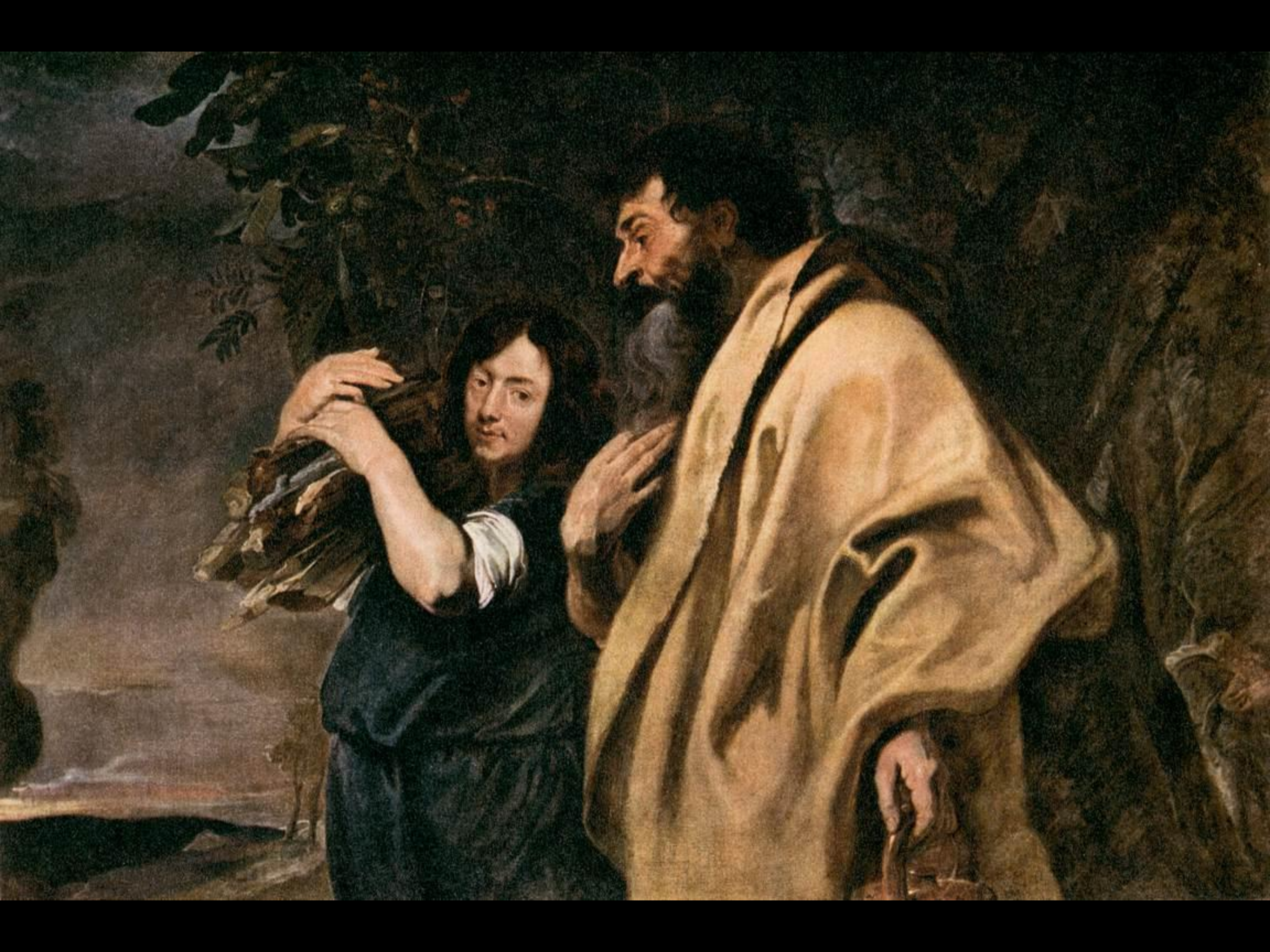
The irrepressible affection of the father.

And he said,

“Behold, the fire and the wood,
but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

The artless curiosity of the child.

A naïveté that makes his future death more heart-rending.



⁸ Abraham said,
“God will provide for Himself
the lamb for the burnt offering,
my son.”

Evasion?

Faith?

Prophecy?

Prayer?

Issac docilely trusts his father's intentions.

So the two of them walked on together.

The final part of the way traversed in silence.

Most poignant and eloquent silence in all literature.

⁹ Then they came to the place
of which God had told him;

and Abraham built the altar there
and arranged the wood,

Strongly suggests Issac's consent.

Probably bound Issac's hands and feet.

and bound his son Isaac
and laid him on the altar,
on top of the wood.

Issac now realizes that *he* is the sacrificial offering.

He will not disobey God.

“Knife” 2X emphasizes the horror of the action.

¹⁰ Abraham stretched out his hand
and took the knife
to slay his son.

To slit his throat before burning his body.

The unthinkable is about to happen.

Story climax and twist.

¹¹ But the angel of the Lord
called to him from heaven and said,
“Abraham, Abraham!”
And he said,
“Here I am.”

¹² He said,

“Do not stretch out your hand against the lad,
and do nothing to him;





“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

“know” = confirming His knowledge

for now I know that you fear God,
since you have not withheld your son,
your only son, from Me.”

Put obeying God above every other consideration.

“...blameless and upright, one who feared God,
and turned away from evil” (Job 1:1)

Strange God who tests is also the gracious Lord

¹³ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked,
and behold,
behind him a ram caught in the thicket
by his horns;

and Abraham went and took the ram
and offered him up for a burnt offering
in the place of his son.

¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place
The Lord Will Provide,

YHWH yir'eh

Discovery of the sacrificial ram was *not* by chance.

as it is said to this day,

“In the mount of the Lord it will be provided.”

Central lesson: God's provision/dependability.

Abraham sacrificed his own will and his wisdom.

i.e. The Lord Himself.

¹⁵ Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham
a second time from heaven,

God's solemn oath.

¹⁶ and said,

“By Myself I have sworn,

declares the Lord,

because you have done this thing

and have not withheld your son,

your only son,

Reassurances of the promises - after the sacrifice.

¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you,
and I will greatly multiply your seed
as the stars of the heavens
and as the sand which is on the seashore;

Sand and stars comparison is meant to be
dramatic, not mathematically precise.

and your seed shall possess
the gate of their enemies.

i.e., conquer your enemies' cities (cf. 24:60).

Victorious with son intact and faith rewarded.

¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth
shall be blessed,
because you have **obeyed** My voice.”

All this, because Abraham faithfully obeyed God.

All the promises first made to Abraham decades earlier are
now augmented and guaranteed by the Lord unreservedly.

“

Abraham's erratic response, sometimes showing faith, sometimes not, had meant that the promises were fulfilled more slowly than might have been anticipated. He had reached his old age with only one son to his name and the right to use just one well in Canaan...

“

But this last display of obedient faith was rewarded by an extension and endorsement of the original promises that not only exceeds every previous formulation, but every subsequent statement of the promises. ”

- Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*

Conclusion leaves so much unsaid.

¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men,
and they arose and went together to Beersheba;
and Abraham lived at Beersheba.

Yet Sarah dies in Hebron (23:2).

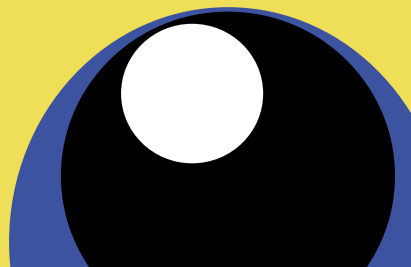
“

Faith is the highest passion
in a human being.

Many in every generation
may not come that far,
but none comes further. ”

- Soren Kierkegaard *Fear and Trembling*

Abraham's Story: What's the Point?



**The God of bursting creation,
the God of superabundant blessing,
the God of covenant promises,
gives us the prototype of Abraham,
whom, in like manner,
we are to**

**trust the invisible,
believe the impossible,
resist the unstoppable,
endure the unfulfilling and mundane,
risk the precious,
and enjoy and experience the
supernatural.**

**He is writing His
“Abrahamish” 21st century
faith story
through your heart, mind,
and hands
to display His glory
in your sphere of influence.**

The End

