

Faith vs. Sight
Genesis 22:1-14

¹ Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

² Then He said, "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

³ So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

⁶ So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

⁷ But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?"

⁸ And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

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

¹¹ But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

¹² And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me."

¹³ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him was* a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide (JIREH); as it is said *to* this day, "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

The story is significant in the Bible as an example of Abraham's unwavering obedience and faith in God, even to the point of being willing to sacrifice his own son. It is also interpreted as a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, who is seen as the ultimate lamb offered for the sins of humanity.

I know this is a story you probably know already but there's some points I want to go through.

Let me build something up first, before studying the story in Genesis.

Let's talk about faith:

Faith

What's faith?

Hebrews 11:1

¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things **not** seen.

In the Bible, faith is defined as a belief in God and trust in His character, promises, and plan for our lives.

The Bible teaches that faith is the foundation for a relationship with God, and it is through faith that we are justified and saved from our sins.

Faith is a complex concept, but at its core, faith is a belief in something that is not immediately visible or provable. Why is complex? How can you explain something that you need to have faith to believe in the first place?

Then, this passage teaches that faith involves a belief in things that are not immediately visible or provable, and a confidence in God's promises and plans for our lives.

We will see how faith is important in this story and how can we apply it in our lives.

But, getting deeper in this concept, if we see the New Testament, faith is also attached with belief in Jesus as the Messiah and the forgiveness of sins that He offers through His death and resurrection.

We are called to have faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and to trust in His love and power to transform their lives.

The Bible teaches that faith is a necessary component for salvation.

I want you to follow this progression:

In the New Testament, it is written that:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9).

This passage and others like it indicate that salvation cannot be earned through good works or personal merit, but rather it is received through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible also teaches that faith is **necessary** for a relationship with God.

In Hebrews 11:6, it says,

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Faith in God is necessary for a relationship with Him, and that without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Overall, the Bible teaches that faith is a necessary component for salvation and a relationship with God. It is through faith in Jesus Christ that we receive the gift of salvation and are able to live a life that is pleasing to God.

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? - James 2:14

Progression:

All these definitions are tied together as you need to believe in God to please Him. Faith itself is a miracle and produces a transformation in you. Now as you have faith, you can obey God and be a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2), and as you are a living sacrifice you will start living out your faith as something natural. It will be something you have in your mind every second, and you hold.

believe-be transformed-live out.

Now, getting into the story, Abraham says:

Here I am

When God calls to Abraham and says "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you," Abraham responds by saying "Here I am."

This response from Abraham can be seen as an expression of his obedience and willingness to follow God's commands.

Remember: believe-be transformed-live out.

By saying "Here I am," Abraham is showing that he is **present** and available to do God's will. It is an expression of his faith and trust in God, even when what God is asking of him is difficult and seemingly impossible.

We need to be available. How can I say I am a believer if I can't be present when God calls me?

In this sense, "Here I am" can also be seen as a declaration of faith, as Abraham is saying that he trusts in God's sovereignty and plans, even when it means sacrificing his beloved son Isaac.

In our own lives, saying "Here I am" to God can be a powerful expression. It is a way of saying that we are available to do God's will, no matter what that may be, and that we trust in His sovereignty and plans for our lives.

By embracing this attitude of faith, we can deepen our relationship with God and experience the peace, comfort, and hope that comes from walking in His will.

Now,

The phrase "Here I am" or a similar declaration of availability and willingness to follow God's will can be found in several other passages throughout the Bible. Some of these include:

1. Isaiah 6:8 - When God calls to Isaiah and says "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah responds with "Here am I! Send me."
2. Exodus 3:4 - When God calls to Moses from the burning bush, Moses responds with "Here I am."
3. Samuel 3:4 - When God calls to Samuel, Samuel responds with "Here I am."
4. Jeremiah 1:6 - When God calls to Jeremiah, he says "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." God responds with "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak." Jeremiah then says "Here I am, send me!"

These examples show that the declaration of "Here I am" or similar expressions are often made by individuals who are being called by God to fulfill a specific purpose or mission.

It is a declaration of obedience and availability to do God's will, regardless of personal circumstances or difficulties.

By making this declaration, these individuals are expressing their faith and trust in God, and their willingness to follow Him wherever He may lead.

Unconditional faith

Unconditional faith in God is a belief in God that is **not dependent on circumstances or personal feelings**. It is a faith that remains steadfast, regardless of what life may bring. In other words, it is a faith that trusts in God's character, love, and power, even in the face of difficulty, uncertainty, or suffering.

Unconditional faith in God is based on the belief that God is in control, that He is good and loving, and that He has a plan for our lives.

This type of faith trusts that God is always **present**, even when we can't see or understand what He is doing.

It is a faith that believes that God is working all things together for good, even when it doesn't seem that way.

Unconditional faith in God requires **humility, obedience, and a willingness to surrender** control.

It is not a passive faith, but an active faith that leads us to seek God's will, trust in His provision, and obey His commands.

Having unconditional faith in God can bring peace, comfort, and hope, even in the most difficult of times. It helps us to see beyond our present circumstances and to trust that God has a greater purpose for our lives. By embracing unconditional faith in God, we can deepen our relationship with Him and find joy and fulfillment in life.

It can be difficult to trust in God when everything seems hard because our trust is often tied to our circumstances and emotions. When things are going well, it can be easier to trust that God

is good and that He has a plan for our lives. However, when we face challenges and difficulties, our trust can be tested, and it can be harder to hold onto our faith.

There are several reasons why it can be difficult to trust in God when everything seems hard, including:

1. **Fear and uncertainty:** When things are difficult, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty. We may question God's goodness or wonder why He is allowing us to go through such a tough time.
2. **Emotional rollercoasters** When we're facing challenges, our emotions can run high, making it harder to focus on God and trust in His plan. We may feel discouraged, angry, or hopeless, which can interfere with our ability to trust in Him.
3. **Limited perspective:** It can be hard to trust in God when everything seems hard because our perspective is limited. We may not be able to see the bigger picture or understand how God is working all things together for good.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to maintain our trust in God even when everything seems hard. This requires us to focus on God's character, to remember His past faithfulness, and to trust in His promises, even when we can't see the outcome. We can also draw strength from other believers, pray for guidance and strength, and seek support from trusted friends and family members.

Regardless of personal circumstances or difficulties. How can we relate about this?

“No God, today I have these plans. Here, this is my agenda. This is what I like”

Splitting the wood

Now I want you to think about Abraham splitting wood.

This was a test of Abraham's faith, as God was asking him to do something that went against all of his natural instincts as a father.

It was a difficult and emotional task to prepare to sacrifice his son, the son whom God had promised to him and Sarah.

In addition to the emotional weight of the task, it would have also been a physically difficult task to split the wood and make the necessary preparations for the sacrifice.

The thought of actually killing his own son would have weighed heavily on Abraham's mind, and he may have had moments of doubt and fear as he prepared to carry out God's command.

Despite the difficulty of the situation, Abraham demonstrates his faith and obedience to God by willingly following through with the sacrifice. This act of faith and obedience is seen as a **precursor to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross**, where God offered up His own Son as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

In our own lives, we may not be asked to make a sacrifice as difficult as Abraham's, but we will still face challenges that test our faith and obedience to God. The story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac serves as an inspiration and reminder of the power of faith and obedience, even in the face of great difficulty.

The Bible contains many examples of individuals who demonstrated faith in God. Here are a few of the most prominent ones:

1. **Moses:** Moses is considered one of the greatest leaders in the Bible, and his story is told in Exodus 1-40. He demonstrates faith by leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and through the wilderness, and by speaking with God face-to-face.
2. **David:** David is considered a man after God's own heart, and his story is told in the books of Samuel and Kings. He demonstrates faith by his trust in God and his willingness to fight against great odds, such as when he defeated the giant Goliath.
3. **Mary, the mother of Jesus:** Mary demonstrates faith by accepting God's will for her life, as described in the New Testament book of Luke, when she is told by an angel that she will give birth to Jesus.
4. **The apostles:** The apostles, including Peter and Paul, demonstrate faith through their willingness to preach the gospel of Jesus and to endure persecution for their beliefs.

Hebrews 11:35b-39

³⁵...Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— ³⁸of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens and caves of the earth.*

³⁹And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

Jesus in the story

The story of Abraham and Isaac is related to Jesus and the gospel in several ways. Here are a few:

1. Foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Jesus: The story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac is seen as a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, who is often referred to as the "Lamb of God." Just as God provided a substitute for Isaac, so too did He provide a substitute for humanity in Jesus, who died on the cross for the sins of the world.
2. Demonstration of God's love: The story of Abraham and Isaac demonstrates God's love for humanity and His willingness to provide a way for humanity to be saved. This love is fulfilled in the gospel message of Jesus, who offers salvation and eternal life to all who believe in Him.
3. Example of faith: Abraham's faith in God and his willingness to obey God's commands, even when it meant sacrificing his son, is an example of the kind of faith that is required for salvation. In the gospel, faith in Jesus as the Savior and Lord is the means by which a person can receive eternal life.
4. The fulfillment of God's promise: The story of Abraham and Isaac is part of God's larger plan to fulfill His promise to Abraham to make him the father of many nations. This promise is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, who is the son of Abraham and the Savior of all nations.

The story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22:1-19 is a powerful reminder of God's love for humanity, the sacrifice of Jesus, and the importance of faith in God. It helps to deepen our understanding of the gospel message and strengthen our faith in Jesus as our Savior.