

8/12/01

"THE LORD GIVETH,"
Genesis 21-22

RELEVANCE?

Test of faith? A long wait?

Has God asked you (to be willing) to let go of something He gave you?

House dedication? Baby dedication?

ABRAHAM TRUSTS GOD TO GIVE HIM A SON (75 +)

ABRAM TRUSTED GOD TO DO WHAT HE PROMISED 15:1-6

God promised to protect and reward Abram 15:1

Abram struggled because he had no heir 15:2-3

God promised to give him a son and to make his seed as numerous as the stars. 15:4-5

Abram believed God's promise 15:6 => Rom. 4:18-22

He believed God when there was no hope Rom 4:18-19

There wasn't a chance he could do this in his own physical strength.

His body was as good as dead—dead people don't have kids!

He didn't waver in unbelief Rom. 4:20

He never wavered concerning what God had promised.

He was convinced God could do what He promised 4:21

He was strengthened in his faith, and gave glory to God, being fully convinced God could do what He promised.

His trust in God was credited as righteousness 4:22

**ABRAM TRIED TO HELP GOD PROVIDE THE SON HE PROMISED
(86) 16:1-4**

After 11 years of waiting, with a push from a doubting wife, he tried to help God out!

Abram failed to trust God to work out the details concerning the birth of his son, on God's timetable, rather than his own.

After all, he was 86 years old. God must need *his* help!

He must be waiting for him to *DO* something about this problem!

Gal. 4:22-23, 29-31

We have a tendency to run out ahead— to want to help God out.

Then we have to live with the consequences of our impatience!

What if God doesn't come through *on time*?

IMPORTANT LESSON:

If Abraham could have doubts, *ANYONE* could!

None of us will *always* trust God *every day* for *everything*!

In spite of Abraham's moments of doubt, he is written down in the "hero's hall of fame," "**Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.**"

"*Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light!*"

How many years do WE have to wait before we give up on God and try to do things OUR way?

GOD RENEWS THE PROMISE TO GIVE ABRAHAM A SON (99) 17:1-8, 15-19

After more than 14 years of waiting, God reaffirms His promise.

Can you imagine the thoughts going through Abram's mind?

He was 99! Yet he believed what God promised.

GOD FULFILLS PROMISE TO GIVE ABRAHAM A SON (100) 21:1-7

After 15 years of waiting, God does what He said He'd do!

How long have you been waiting for God to do what YOU'RE asking for?

I've had numerous opportunities to watch God provide children to the childless.

One couple God brought into our lives waited for years for a child.

I remember praying with them in the hospital as she was about to have surgery for a problem the doctors thought might be contributing to her inability to have children.

We prayed. We waited for God to work. She became pregnant.

One night I was called to the hospital in the middle of the night; she was about to lose that baby. God worked.

Years later, after 3 babies in a short time, they commented: "Your prayers were effective.

We asked God to turn on her ability to have children—but didn't tell him *how many!*

Another couple, after 3 miscarriages gave up. Then God provided, another means.

They ended up with triplets. They too commented: We asked God for three, we didn't make clear that we didn't really want them *all at once!*

Then there's our own miracle granddaughter, that God made possible, after ten years of marriage.

Not a guarantee God will always do that for everybody.

Sometimes, for reasons known only to Him, God tells a family, "That's NOT my plan for you; trust me, – though you don't understand my plan!"

We can trust God to give us the children HE wants us to have.

That works in reverse too!

One couple asked: "*But what if God wants us to have another child and we don't have that child?*" Our response: "Don't worry, if God wants another child born, He'll see to it you have that child!"

A family we know learned about that. They had her tubes tied.

She got pregnant and had another baby.

Doctors checked on the original procedure.

"There's no way you could've gotten pregnant!" While the mom sat with a baby in her arms!

You can trust God to give you all the family He wants you to have!

[After years of waiting, he has the promised son—then God asks him to give him back!]

ABRAHAM TRUSTS GOD ENOUGH TO GIVE UP THE SON

GOD PUTS ABRAHAM TO THE TEST: Is he willing to sacrifice His son, to please the God who gave him to them. **22:1-2**

Is the son more important than the God Who gave him?

Is the God Who gives more important than what He gives?

This command made no sense at all!

It contradicted all the promises God had made to Abraham.

ABRAHAM TRUSTS GOD ENOUGH TO OBEY IMMEDIATELY AND WITHOUT WAVERING! 22:3-10

He moves immediately to do what God says 22:3-5a

Abraham knew God well enough to know he could trust Him.

If God wanted his only son, He could have him.

Do WE trust God that much?!!!

Can He have anything He wants from us?

He trusts God is going to intervene, without knowing how 22:5b-8

Rather than complain, he worships! 22:5b

He expects to bring Isaac back alive! 22:5c

He doesn't understand how God's going to do it, but he knows he can trust Him!

Do you know that feeling?

He tells Isaac: "God is providing a lamb." 22:6-8

No matter what happens, God provides the lamb.

God gave him; God can take him away!

Whatever God does, He gave him!

He doesn't hesitate to offer his only son, if that's what God wants him to do 22:9-10

The One Who gave the son, is more important than the son!

Obeying the God Who gives is more important than clinging to what God gives!

Abraham is committed to obeying God. Period!

GOD INTERVENES TO DELIVER THE PROMISED SON AND TO PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE SACRIFICE 22:11-14

God intervenes to stop the sacrifice 22:11-12a

Abraham won't withhold anything God wants from him-*nothing!* 22:12b

God provides a ram 22:13

Abraham establishes a memorial: "Jehovah-Jireh"--"The LORD will provide!" 22:14

GOD PROMISES TO BLESS ABRAHAM AND TO MAKE HIM A BLESSING to others 22:15-18

HEBREWS PRESENTS ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH 11:17-19

He was motivated by faith 11:17a

He was ready to sacrifice his one and only son, through whom God had promised to fulfill His promises 11:17-18

He believed God *could* raise Isaac from the dead to fulfill His promises.

But, –more important– *He could be trusted to fulfill His promise!*

He didn't know what God WOULD do. But he knew he could trust God.

He knew WHO he was trusting. He focused on GOD, not on the son.

Abraham trusted the promise of God more than the provision of God.

God had given him; God could take him away.

He wasn't going to cling to his son.

He was going to cling to GOD who gave him the son!

Corrie ten Boom

It's not likely God will ask ANY of us to take a child up into the mountains and sacrifice him there.

But I have seen God call some to leave home and serve Him in another part of the world.

It's not easy to let go of our children.

We don't easily release them to Him, to go serve Him somewhere else.

Parents are you willing to let your kids go, if God is calling them to serve Him somewhere?

There may be risk. They might DIE there.

They might take our grandkids far away.

Abraham believed God; He was willing to let go of him, to give him back to God.

Are we willing to do that with OUR kids?

Something we're not willing to let go of?

Exx–something we trusted God for–waited a long time for?

Is God more important to us than the things He gives us?

Are we determined to cling to something He gave us–rather than to HIM?

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

He didn't know what God would do about Isaac, but He trusted God.

That's the way it works for us too!

Relevance?

Which is more important to US? God the giver–or the things He's given us?

Trusting Him–following wherever He may lead us? OR, clinging to what He has given us?

Obeying the God Who gives is more important than clinging to what He has given!

Which is worth more to YOU?