GENESIS: THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS · STUDY NOTES

Study 14: The LORD will provide

For personal study or groups

Your name

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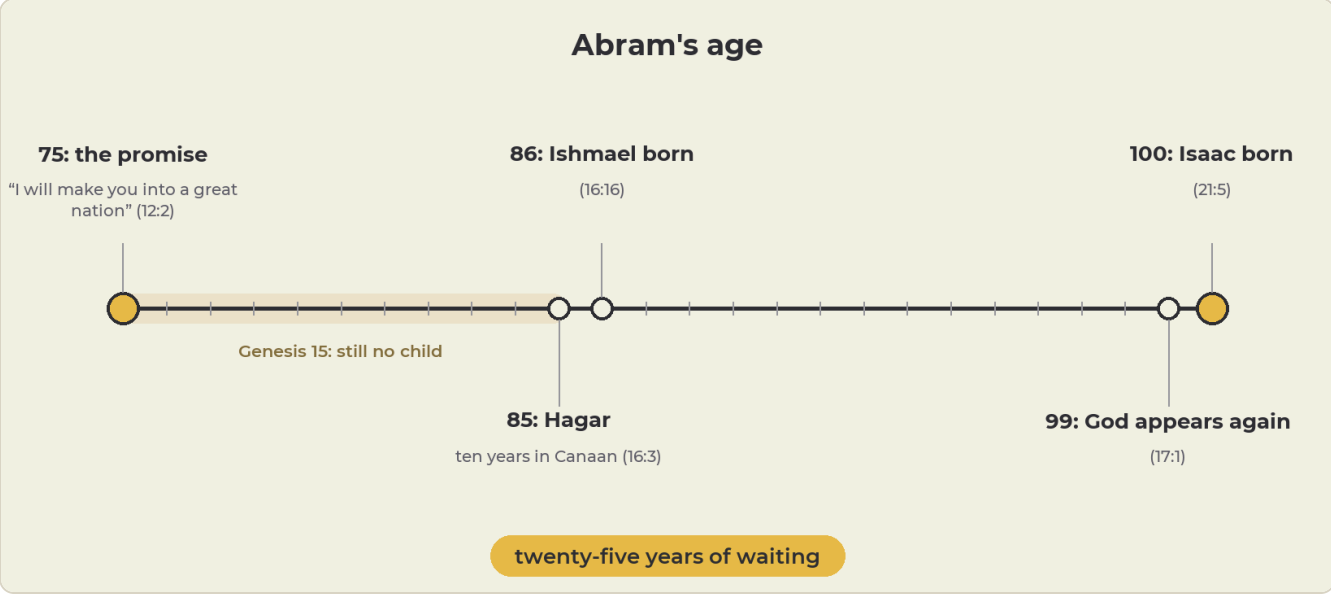
How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

📖 **Before you start: read Genesis 21:1–23:20.** Read it in your own Bible, all the way through, before the videos. Then in this study we go through it together, a few verses at a time. (About 10 minutes.)

PART 1

Isaac is born

Genesis 21:1–34; Galatians 4:28–31; Romans 4:17



Twenty-five years of waiting: Abram was 75 when God called him (12:4), 86 when Ishmael was born (16:16), 99 when God spoke of Isaac again (17:1, 19), and 100 when Isaac was born (21:5).

1. "As He had said." Moses does not describe the birth: no old mother, no first cry. Instead, three times in two verses he says the same thing in different words: "as He had said", "what He had promised", "at the very time God had promised". That is the point. Isaac is born, not because Abraham had been faithful (he had just lied at Gerar), but because God is faithful. It is all of grace, and God kept His word to the very day, as He had said: "At the appointed time I will return to you" (18:14). God does not keep His promises roughly or late. We have not been given the promise of a son, but we have been given many others: forgiveness in Christ, His presence always, the resurrection of His people. Our waiting is not wasted.

1 **Read Genesis 21:1–7**

What does Moses say three times about the birth of Isaac? What did Sarah say?

2. "God has made me laugh." Isaac's name means "he laughs". Abraham had laughed in doubt, and Sarah had laughed to herself behind the tent door. Now Sarah laughs again, and it is the laugh of joy, and it is God's gift: "God has made me laugh." Abraham, for his part, gave the boy the name God had chosen and circumcised him on the eighth day, "as God had commanded him". The gift led him to obey the Giver. Paul looks back at this birth and calls God "the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being what does not yet exist" (Romans 4:17). Isaac's birth was a kind of life from the dead. Remember that thought: Abraham will need it in the next chapter.

2 **Read Romans 4:17**

What kind of God did Abraham believe in?

3. The son of the slave woman. At the feast when Isaac was weaned, Ishmael, now about sixteen, was "mocking her son". The word comes from the same root as Isaac's name: Isaac "laughs", but Ishmael laughed at him with scorn. Paul calls it persecution: "the son born by the flesh persecuted the son born by the Spirit" (Galatians 4:29). Sarah's demand was sharp, and we may wonder whether she spoke in anger; but God told Abraham to do as she asked, "for through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned". The matter "distressed Abraham greatly", because Ishmael was his son and he loved him. It was the bitter fruit of the plan Abraham and Sarah had made years before, when they did not wait for God. Sins that have been forgiven can still leave sorrows that last for years. But God was kind to Abraham even here: "I will also make a nation of the slave woman's son, because he is your offspring."

3 **Read Genesis 21:8–13**

What did Sarah see at the feast? What did God tell Abraham, and what did He promise about Ishmael?

4. Two sons. Both boys were sons of Abraham, both were circumcised, and both were promised to become nations. But only one was the child of the promise. Ishmael was born "by the flesh", by human planning when people had stopped waiting for God; Isaac was born "by the Spirit", by God's power alone, at God's time. Paul says the same difference runs through the people of God today: "Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise" (Galatians 4:28). Being born into a Christian family does not make anyone a child of God; neither does coming to church. We must be born of the Spirit and trust the promise God has given in Jesus Christ.

4 **Read Galatians 4:28–31**

Who are the children of promise? Which child does the Scripture say shares in the inheritance?

5. "God has heard the voice of the boy." Abraham rose early and sent Hagar and Ishmael away with bread and a skin of water, and they were soon lost in the wilderness near Beersheba. When the water ran out, Hagar left the boy under a bush and sat a bowshot away: "I cannot bear to watch the boy die!" It is one of the saddest scenes in Genesis. Then: "God heard the voice of the boy." The name Ishmael means "God hears" (16:11), and God heard the boy whose name means God hears. Notice the words "where he lies": under a bush, far from his father's tent, the boy was not out of God's sight or hearing. The Bible does not say that Hagar or the boy prayed; it says that God heard. The cry of the suffering reaches God's ears. Hagar had met this God before and called Him "the God who sees me" (16:13), and now, in her despair, she seems to have forgotten. But God had not forgotten her.

6. "God opened her eyes." The well had been there all along. Hagar was dying of thirst within reach of water because, in her grief, she could not see it. What she needed most was not a new well but opened eyes. How often that is true of us: we are anxious about tomorrow, and God has already provided for it; we despair, and the promise we need is in the Bible on our shelf. Above all it is true of salvation: no one sees Christ until God opens his eyes. "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37). Then the story ends: "God was with the boy." Ishmael was not part of the line of promise, but God kept him alive and watched over him. This is God's

kindness to people outside His covenant, who "causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good" (Matthew 5:45). It is not the same as salvation, but it is real kindness, and it teaches God's people to be kind to everyone, as He is.

5 **Read Genesis 21:14–21**

What did God do when Hagar and the boy ran out of water? What did the angel say?

7. A king, a well and a tree. Abimelech, the king of Gerar of the last study, had seen Abraham at his worst, and yet he says: "God is with you in all that you do." He asks for a treaty: "Swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me." After chapter 20, that request has a sting. In that dry country a well meant life, and when Abimelech's servants had seized one of Abraham's wells, the two men made a covenant, with seven ewe lambs as a witness. The place was called Beersheba: "Beer" means "well", and "sheba" can mean both "oath" and "seven". God was giving His servant peace with his neighbours, water for his flocks, and a place to live and worship. He cares for our ordinary needs too: none of them is small to Him.

8. A tree for the Eternal God. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree and "called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God". A tamarisk takes many years to grow. You plant a tree like that when you expect to stay, or when you are thinking of those who will come after you. Abraham still did not own the land; but he planted a tree, because he trusted the God who would give it to his children. And he gave God a name he had not used before: "the Eternal God". Abraham was a hundred and knew he would not see all the promises fulfilled; but his God has no beginning and no end: "from everlasting to everlasting You are God" (Psalm 90:2). Our lives are short and many of God's promises reach beyond them. But we trust a God who does not grow old.

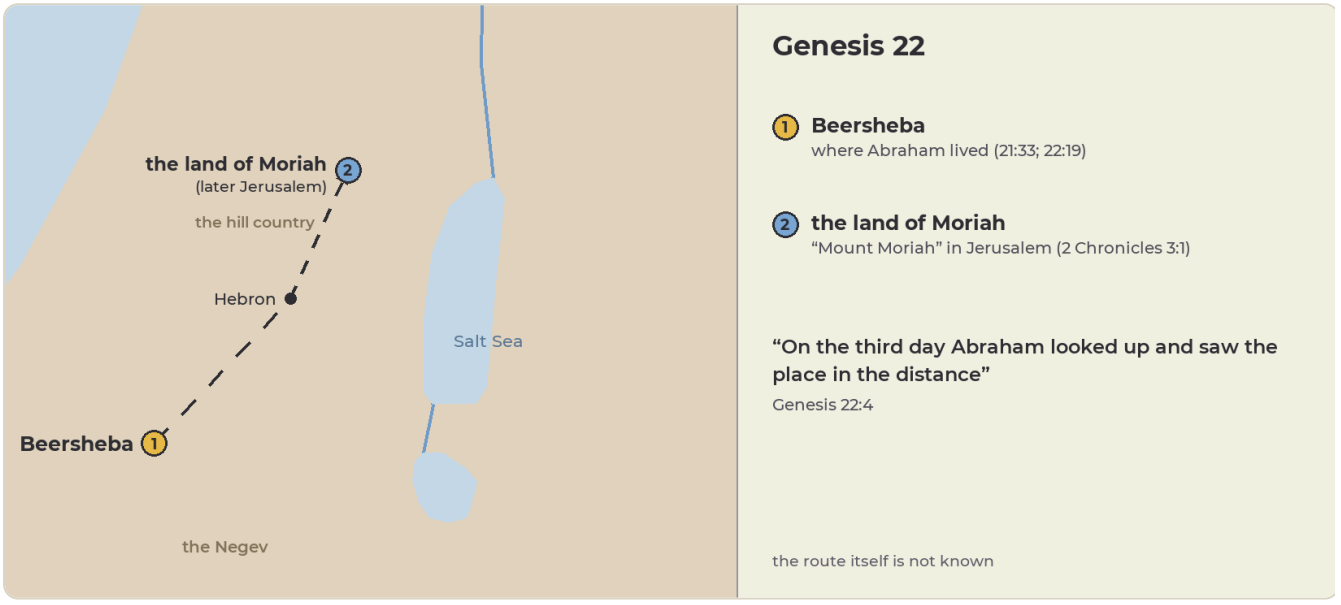
6 **Read Genesis 21:22–34**

What did Abimelech say about Abraham? What did Abraham do at Beersheba, and what name did he call on?

PART 2

On the mountain

Genesis 22:1–19; Hebrews 11:17–19; Romans 8:32; John 1:29



From Beersheba to Moriah: Abraham lived at Beersheba, in the south, and went north through the hills "to the land of Moriah". The Bible later names the place: "Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah" (2 Chronicles 3:1). The exact route is not known.

1. "God tested Abraham." We are told at the start so that we read everything in its light: this was a test. It was not a temptation to do evil: "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone" (James 1:13). Satan tempts in order to make us fall; God tests in order to prove faith and make it stronger, like gold put into the fire, not to destroy it but to show that it is gold (1 Peter 1:7). And we must be very clear: God has never wanted human sacrifice. He said of Israel's child sacrifices that it was "something I never commanded or mentioned, nor did it even enter My mind" (Jeremiah 19:5). He never intended Isaac to die. But Abraham did not know that. This was a unique command, given once, to Abraham, at a unique point in God's plan. It gives no one today any reason to think God would ask such a thing. God now speaks in His written Word, and His Word forbids taking life. If anyone ever thinks God is telling them to harm another person, they can be certain that the voice is not from God. The test came "some time later", when everything seemed settled. Tests often come like that. And Abraham answered, "Here I am."

7 **Read Genesis 22:1–2**

What did God do to Abraham? What did He ask him to take and offer?

8 **Read James 1:13**

Does God tempt anyone to do evil?

2. Your past, your future. The first time God spoke to Abraham, he said, "Leave your country, your kindred, and your father's household": each phrase closer to the heart. Now God speaks the same way: "Take your son... your only son Isaac, whom you love", again each phrase closer. God asked Abraham first to give up his past; now He asks him to give up his future. "Your son": not a lamb. "Your only son": Ishmael had gone. "Isaac": the child of all the years of waiting. "Whom you love": God knew exactly how much. And it was his faith that was being tested too: God had said, "Through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned", and Isaac was not yet married. When God told Abraham to send Ishmael away, He gave a reason; here He gives none. Some teachers have asked whether God was also testing if Isaac had come to mean more than God Himself. The Bible does not say that, and we should not claim more than it says; but it is a question for each of us. The good gifts God gives, our children, our marriages, our work, can slowly take His place in our hearts. They are safest when we have put them back in His hands.

3. "Abraham got up early the next morning." Moses does not tell us what Abraham felt; he tells us what he did. No argument, no delay: he saddled the donkey and split the wood with his own hands. Then he walked for three days, with three nights to turn back. He did not turn back. Did he feel nothing? Not at all: faith is not the absence of feeling. In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus felt the full weight of what lay before Him and prayed, "Yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Abraham's love for Isaac was real, but his trust in God was greater. At the foot of the mountain he left the servants behind: some things are done alone with God.

4. "We will return to you." Abraham told his servants, "The boy and I will go over there to worship, and then we will return to you." Was he lying? The Bible tells us what he was thinking: "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and in a sense, he did receive Isaac back from death" (Hebrews 11:19). This was no blind leap in the dark. God had promised offspring through Isaac. God cannot lie. So if Isaac died, God would raise him. He had already seen life come from a womb as good as dead, in Isaac's own birth. That is faith: believing God's word when everything we can see says the opposite. And true faith shows itself in what we do: "his

faith was working with his actions" (James 2:22). Abraham was counted righteous by faith alone, years before (15:6); here his faith is shown to be real by his obedience. The faith that saves is never alone.

9 **Read Genesis 22:3–8**

What did Abraham tell his servants? What did he answer when Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb?"

10 **Read Hebrews 11:17–19**

What did Abraham reason about God? In what sense did he receive Isaac back?

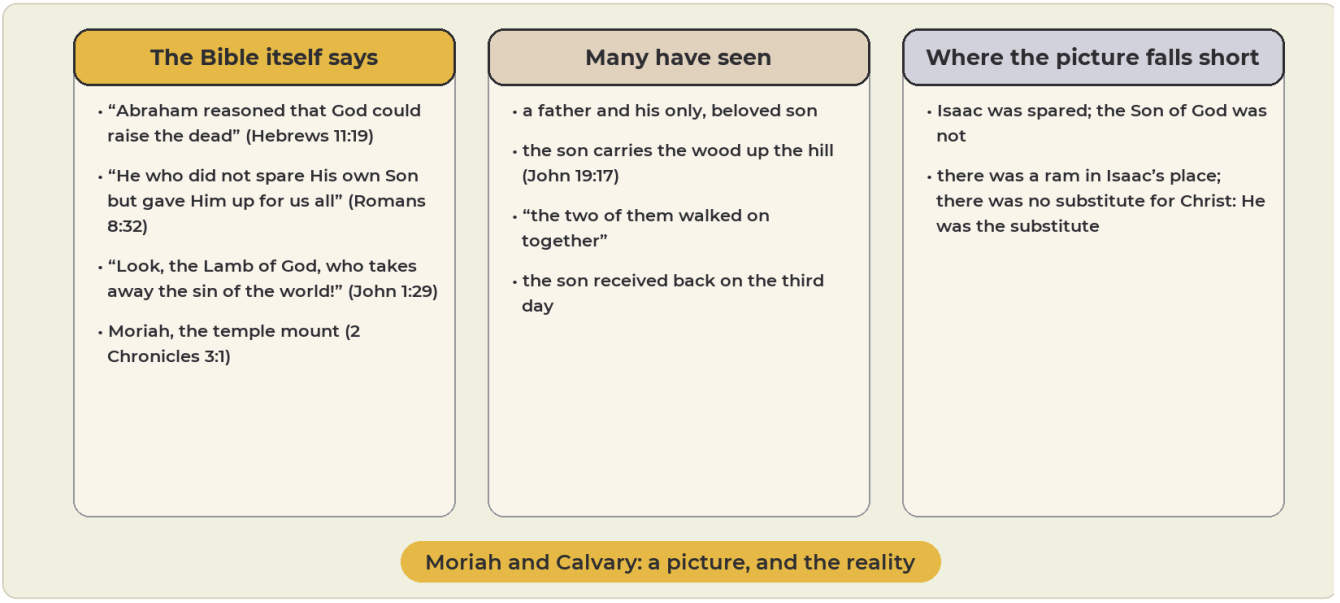
5. "God Himself will provide the lamb." Isaac carried the wood; Abraham carried the fire and the knife. "My father!" "Here I am, my son": the same answer Abraham gave God. "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" And Abraham answered: "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Abraham did not know how, but he knew Who. Twice we are told, "the two of them walked on together", before and after Isaac's question. Isaac was strong enough to carry the wood, and his father was well over a hundred; he could have run or resisted. The Bible gives no sign that he did.

6. "Now I know that you fear God." Moses tells every step: the altar, the wood, the cords, the knife. In Abraham's heart the offering was already made. Then the angel of the LORD called, "Abraham, Abraham!", and for the third time in the chapter Abraham answered, "Here I am." God knows everything, so the test did not give Him new information; it brought Abraham's faith out into the open, for Abraham and for every generation that reads this chapter. To fear God is not to be terrified of Him but to honour Him so deeply that He comes before everything and everyone, even before the son of the promise.

7. "In place of his son." Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns, and "offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son". Those words are the heart of the chapter: a substitute is one who takes the place of another and bears what the other should have borne. And Abraham named the place "The LORD Will Provide": the word means "to see", as when we say, "I'll see to it". He did not name it after his own obedience but after what God did. And it became a saying in Israel: "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided", the same mountain where the temple would stand.

11 **Read Genesis 22:9–14**

What did the angel of the LORD say? What did Abraham offer in place of his son? What did he call the place?



Moriah and Calvary: what the Bible itself says, what many have seen, and where the picture falls short.

8. Moriah and Calvary. Some of this the Bible says plainly; some many teachers have seen, and we offer it gently, as a picture. *The Bible itself says:* Abraham believed God could raise the dead (Hebrews 11:19); "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32); and John the Baptist cried, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb?" Here He is. And Moriah became the temple mount in the city where Jesus would die (2 Chronicles 3:1). *What many have seen:* a father and his only, beloved son; the son carrying the wood up the hill, as Jesus would carry His cross (John 19:17); father and son walking on together; and the son received back, as it were from the dead, on the third day of the journey. *Where the picture falls short:* Isaac was spared, and the Son of God was not. On Moriah a voice said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy"; at Calvary no voice came. Isaac had a ram in his place; for Jesus there was no substitute. He was the substitute.

9. The Lamb God provided. In a sense we are all like Isaac on the altar: because of our sin, the judgement of God rightly hangs over us, and we can no more save ourselves than Isaac could untie the cords. But God has provided a Lamb. "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The knife that should have fallen on us fell on Him. If you have never trusted in Christ, you do not need to bring God anything or make yourself better first: God Himself has provided the Lamb. And if you are a Christian: "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how

will He not also, along with Him, freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). He has provided the greatest thing; He will not fail us in the smaller ones.

12 **Read Romans 8:32**

What did God not spare? What does Paul ask next?

13 **Read John 1:29**

What did John say when he saw Jesus coming?

10. "By Myself I have sworn." The angel of the LORD spoke a second time, and God swore an oath by Himself, since "He had no one greater to swear by" (Hebrews 6:13). Why would God, who cannot lie, swear? "to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear to the heirs of the promise" (Hebrews 6:17), so that "we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be strongly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (6:18–19). The promises were not new: stars, sand, blessing for all nations. Abraham did not earn them by his obedience; they had been given freely years before. Now they are confirmed with an oath. And the last promise, "through your offspring all nations of the earth will be blessed", points to One: "and to your seed, meaning One, who is Christ" (Galatians 3:16). That blessing has reached us, in our own land and language, through the gospel.

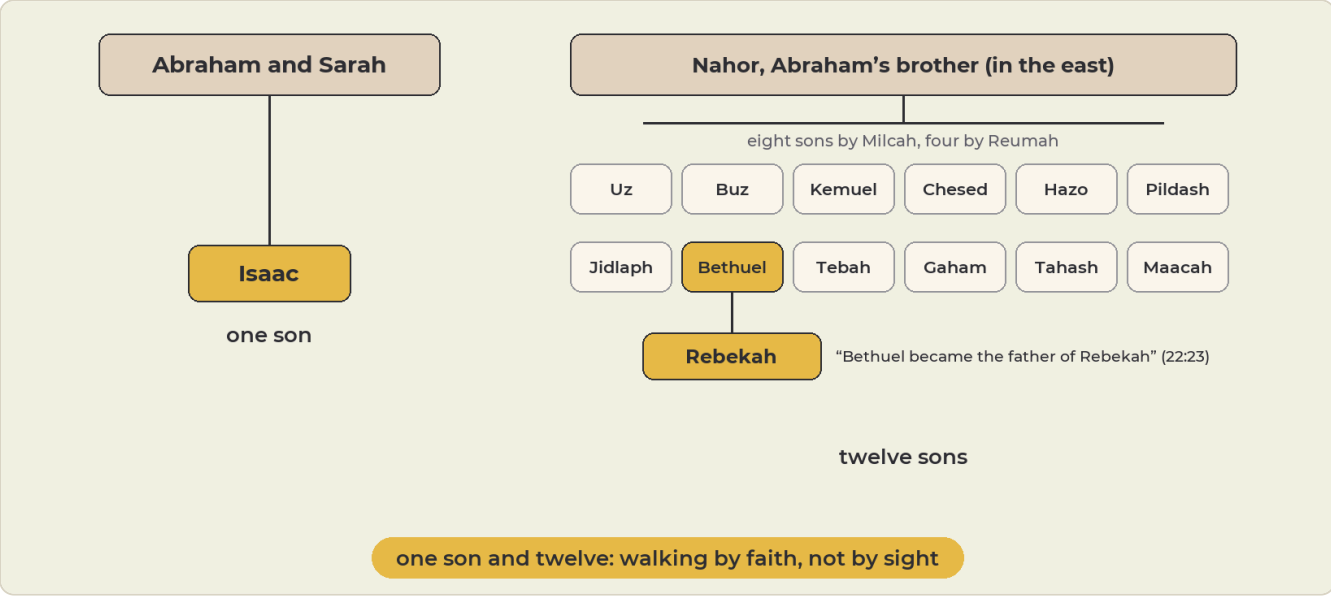
14 **Read Genesis 22:15–19**

How did God swear? What did He promise Abraham?

PART 3

A grave in the land

Genesis 22:20–23:20; Hebrews 11:13–16



One son and twelve: Abraham and Sarah had one son, Isaac. Abraham's brother Nahor, still in the east, had twelve sons: eight by Milcah and four by Reumah (22:23–24). One name is lit: "Bethuel became the father of Rebekah."

1. One son, and twelve. News came to Abraham from his brother Nahor, who had stayed in the east: twelve sons, eight by Milcah and four by another woman. Think how it sounded to Abraham. He was the one God had chosen and promised descendants as many as the stars; and after all these years he had one son, who had almost died on an altar. His brother, who had received no promise, had twelve. If Abraham had looked only at what he could see, the family without the promise would seem to be doing far better. But God's people "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). God had just sworn by Himself; one son was enough. The people of God have often been few. Many believers today are the only Christian in their family or workplace. Do not be discouraged by numbers: one day "a multitude too large to count, from every nation and tribe and people and tongue" will stand before the throne (Revelation 7:9), because God keeps His word.

2. "Bethuel became the father of Rebekah." There is a second reason for the list: only one person in it has anything more said about them. In chapter 24 Abraham's servant will go back to that very family to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham did not yet know it; but God was already preparing the next step, far away, in a family Abraham had not seen for many years. Before we know what we will need, God has often already provided it. The LORD will provide.

15 **Read Genesis 22:20–24**

Whose name has more said about it than the others?

3. "Sarah lived to be 127 years old." Sarah is the only woman in the whole Bible whose age at death is recorded. Abraham is the father of all who believe; Sarah was the mother of the promised son. She was not perfect: she gave Hagar to Abraham, laughed at the promise, and denied that she had laughed. But that is not how the Bible remembers her: "By faith Sarah, even though she was barren and beyond the proper age, was enabled to conceive a child, because she considered Him faithful who had promised" (Hebrews 11:11). And yet, "she died". She lived to see the promise fulfilled, but not all of it. Death comes to believers and unbelievers alike; the question is not whether we will die, but whether we are ready.

4. "To mourn and to weep for her." Abraham, who had been ready to give up his only son, wept beside the body of his wife. Does that mean his faith had failed? When His friend Lazarus died, the Lord Jesus stood at the tomb, and "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Death is an enemy; it came into the world because of sin, and it tears apart what God joined together. It is right to grieve. Paul does not say, "Do not grieve", but "so that you will not grieve like the rest, who are without hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Christians weep, but they weep with hope. And then "Abraham got up from beside his dead wife": there is a time to sit and weep, and a time to get up and do what needs to be done.

16 **Read Genesis 23:1–2**

How old was Sarah when she died? What did Abraham do?

5. "A foreigner and an outsider." Abraham had come into Canaan at seventy-five, and was now about a hundred and thirty-seven. For more than sixty years he had lived in the land God had promised, and did not own a single field, not even a place for a grave. "He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground" (Acts 7:5). The Hittites answered with great respect, "You are God's chosen one among us", and generously offered the finest of their tombs. These neighbours could see that God was with Abraham, as Abimelech had. But Abraham did not want to borrow a tomb.

17 **Read Genesis 23:3–6**

What did Abraham call himself? What did the Hittites offer him?

6. Not a gift, but a purchase. Abraham asked for one particular place, the cave of Machpelah at the end of Ephron's field, and insisted on paying "full price". Ephron answered with the courtesy of the day: "I give you the field", and then, as if it hardly mattered, named his price: "four hundred shekels of silver, but what is that between you and me?" That was a very high price (centuries later Jeremiah bought a field for seventeen shekels; we must be careful comparing prices across so many centuries). Abraham did not bargain: he weighed out the silver there and then, "in the hearing of the Hittites", at the city gate, where business was witnessed. Why refuse the gift? Years before he had refused even a thread or a sandal strap from the king of Sodom, "lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'" Now again he would owe the land to no one but God. A gift could be taken back, by Ephron or by his children; a purchase made in public was Abraham's and his family's for good.

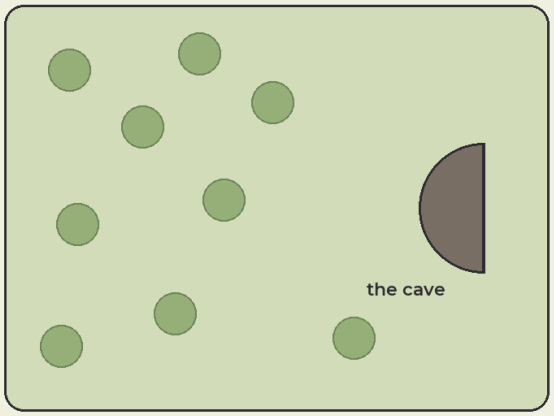
18 **Read Genesis 23:7–16**

What did Abraham ask to buy? How much did he pay, and where was it witnessed?

7. The cave of Machpelah. This field and cave became the family grave: Sarah first, then Abraham, buried by Isaac and Ishmael; then Isaac and Rebekah, and Leah; and at the end of Genesis, Jacob, carried all the way from Egypt by his sons. Joseph, before he died in Egypt, made his family promise to carry his bones up to the land of promise. They did not want to lie in Egypt, however great Egypt was. The only piece of the promised land that Abraham ever owned was a grave.

19 **Read Genesis 23:17–20**

What was deeded to Abraham? What did he do with it?



Ephron's field at Machpelah, near Mamre (23:17)

buried here:

Sarah	Genesis 23:19
Abraham	Genesis 25:9–10
Isaac and Rebekah	Genesis 49:31
Leah	Genesis 49:31
Jacob	Genesis 50:13

"the field Abraham purchased… as a burial site" (Genesis 49:30)

The cave of Machpelah: "the field Abraham purchased… as a burial site" (49:30). Buried here: Sarah (23:19), Abraham (25:9–10), Isaac and Rebekah, and Leah (49:31), and Jacob (50:13).

8. A grave in the promised land. Twice in the chapter Moses says where this happened: "in the land of Canaan". God had promised, "All the land that you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever", but had also said that his descendants would take it only generations later. Abraham would not see it; yet at the end of his life he bought one field, paid in full and witnessed. Why? Because he believed God. He could have taken Sarah back to the east. By burying her here, he said: this is our land because God has promised it; we are not going back; one day our children will possess it all. The cave was like a first instalment, a pledge of everything still to come. It is like the field Jeremiah later bought when Jerusalem was about to fall: it looked foolish, but it was a sign that God would bring His people back. It was faith, buying land in the promise.

9. Strangers on the earth. The letter to the Hebrews says Abraham looked for more than Canaan: "All these people died in faith, without having received the things they were promised… they acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13); "they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (11:16). Not strangers only in Canaan, but strangers on the earth. Every Christian is in the same position: "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). We are travellers, passing through. If we remember that, we hold the things of this world more loosely, we are less anxious to own more or afraid to lose what we have, and we are not ashamed to be different, because God is not ashamed to be called our God.

20 **Read Hebrews 11:13–16**

What did these people acknowledge? What were they longing for?

10. Death is not the end of the promise. God's promise did not keep Sarah from dying, and would not keep Abraham from dying; but it did not end at the grave. Long afterwards, God called Himself "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob", and Jesus said that those words prove the resurrection: "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32). Abraham and Sarah are not lost. And there is another tomb that matters even more than Machpelah: the tomb outside Jerusalem where Jesus was laid, empty on the third day. "Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). His empty tomb is God's pledge that the graves of His people will be emptied too: "since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). A Christian can stand by a grave and weep, as Abraham did, and still hope, as Abraham did. And each of us must ask: when my time comes, am I ready? If my hope is in Jesus Christ, death is the door into the city God has prepared.

21 **Read Matthew 22:31–32**

What does Jesus say God is? What does that show about Abraham?

Study 14 in summary

After twenty-five years of waiting, God kept His word to the very day, and Isaac was born; Sarah laughed for joy. Ishmael, who mocked, was sent away, and God heard the boy whose name means "God hears" and opened Hagar's eyes to a well. At Beersheba Abraham planted a tree and called on the Eternal God. Then God tested Abraham on Mount Moriah: "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love." Abraham obeyed, reasoning that God could raise the dead, and God provided a ram "in place of his son". Abraham named the place The LORD Will Provide, and the far greater Lamb whom God provided came to the same hills. Last, Sarah died, and Abraham wept and bought a grave in the promised land: faith that looks beyond death to the city God has prepared.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How did God keep His word to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 21:1–2, and what promise of His are you still waiting to see fulfilled?

2. What do you learn from God's care for Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness (Genesis 21:17–19)?

3. What did Abraham answer when Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb?" (Genesis 22:8)? How has God provided the Lamb for you (John 1:29; Romans 8:32)?

4. What did Abraham's field at Machpelah show about his faith (Genesis 23:19–20; Hebrews 11:13–16)? What does it mean for you to be a stranger and exile on the earth?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 14

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GENESIS · STUDY 14 · MEMORY VERSE

"And Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. So to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.'"

Genesis 22:14

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

"I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You." (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Genesis 21:1–7** *[1]Now the LORD attended to Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised. [2]So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised. [3]And Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore to him. [4]When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. [5]Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. [6]Then Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears of this will laugh with me." [7]She added, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."*

2 **Romans 4:17** *As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the presence of God, in whom he believed, the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being what does not yet exist.*

3 **Genesis 21:8–13** *[8]So the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned. [9]But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking her son, [10]and she said to Abraham, "Expel the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac!" [11]Now this matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son Ishmael. [12]But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to everything that Sarah tells you, for through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned. [13]But I will also make a nation of the slave woman's son, because he is your offspring."*

4 **Galatians 4:28–31** *[28]Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. [29]At that time, however, the son born by the flesh persecuted the son born by the Spirit. It is the same now. [30]But what does the Scripture say? "Expel the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." [31]Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.*

5 **Genesis 21:14–21** *[14]Early in the morning, Abraham got up, took bread and a skin of water, put them on Hagar's shoulders, and sent her away with the boy. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. [15]When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes. [16]Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she said, "I cannot bear to watch the boy die!" And as she sat nearby, she lifted up her voice and wept. [17]Then God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, "What is wrong, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he lies. [18]Get up, lift up the boy, and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." [19]Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. [20]And God was with the boy, and he grew up and settled in the wilderness and became a great archer. [21]And while he was dwelling in the Wilderness of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.*

6 **Genesis 21:22–34** *22 At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham,*
“God is with you in all that you do. 23 Now, therefore, swear to me here before God that you will not deal
falsely with me or my children or descendants. Show to me and to the country in which you reside the
same kindness that I have shown to you.” 24 And Abraham replied, “I swear it.” 25 But when Abraham
complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech’s servants had seized, 26 Abimelech replied, “I do not
know who has done this. You did not tell me, so I have not heard about it until today.” 27 So Abraham
brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant. 28 Abraham
separated seven ewe lambs from the flock, 29 and Abimelech asked him, “Why have you set apart these
seven ewe lambs?” 30 He replied, “You are to accept the seven ewe lambs from my hand as my witness that
I dug this well.” 31 So that place was called Beersheba, because it was there that the two of them swore an
oath. 32 After they had made the covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army
got up and returned to the land of the Philistines. 33 And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba,
and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God. 34 And Abraham resided in the land of
the Philistines for a long time.

7 **Genesis 22:1–2** *1 Some time later God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he*
answered. 2 “Take your son,” God said, “your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah.
Offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.”

8 **James 1:13** *When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by*
evil, nor does He tempt anyone.

9 **Genesis 22:3–8** *3 So Abraham got up early the next morning, saddled his donkey, and took along two*
of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had
designated. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 “Stay here with the
donkey,” Abraham told his servants. “The boy and I will go over there to worship, and then we will return
to you.” 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac. He himself carried
the fire and the sacrificial knife, and the two of them walked on together. 7 Then Isaac said to his father
Abraham, “My father!” “Here I am, my son,” he replied. “The fire and the wood are here,” said Isaac, “but
where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” 8 Abraham answered, “God Himself will provide the lamb for the
burnt offering, my son.” And the two walked on together.

10 **Hebrews 11:17–19** *17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac on the altar. He who*
had received the promises was ready to offer his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him,
“Through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned.” 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and
in a sense, he did receive Isaac back from death.

11 **Genesis 22:9–14** *9When they arrived at the place God had designated, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar, atop the wood. 10Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. 11Just then the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12"Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him," said the angel, "for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me." 13Then Abraham looked up and saw behind him a ram in a thicket, caught by its horns. So he went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14And Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. So to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."*

12 **Romans 8:32** *He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, freely give us all things?*

13 **John 1:29** *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

14 **Genesis 22:15–19** *15And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time, 16saying, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your only son, 17I will surely bless you, and I will multiply your descendants like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will possess the gates of their enemies. 18And through your offspring all nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." 19Abraham went back to his servants, and they got up and set out together for Beersheba. And Abraham settled in Beersheba.*

15 **Genesis 22:20–24** *20Some time later, Abraham was told, "Milcah has also borne sons to your brother Nahor: 21Uz the firstborn, his brother Buz, Kemuel (the father of Aram), 22Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milcah bore these eight sons to Abraham's brother Nahor. 24Moreover, Nahor's concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.*

16 **Genesis 23:1–2** *1Now Sarah lived to be 127 years old. 2She died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went out to mourn and to weep for her.*

17 **Genesis 23:3–6** *3Then Abraham got up from beside his dead wife and said to the Hittites, 4"I am a foreigner and an outsider among you. Give me a burial site among you so that I can bury my dead." 5The Hittites replied to Abraham, 6"Listen to us, sir. You are God's chosen one among us. Bury your dead in the finest of our tombs. None of us will withhold his tomb for burying your dead."*

18 **Genesis 23:7–16** *7Then Abraham rose and bowed down before the people of the land, the Hittites. 8“If you are willing for me to bury my dead,” he said to them, “listen to me, and approach Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf 9to sell me the cave of Machpelah that belongs to him; it is at the end of his field. Let him sell it to me in your presence for full price, so that I may have a burial site.” 10Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth. So in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of his city, Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham, 11“No, my lord. Listen to me. I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead.” 12Again Abraham bowed down before the people of the land 13and said to Ephron in their presence, “If you will please listen to me, I will pay you the price of the field. Accept it from me, so that I may bury my dead there.” 14Ephron answered Abraham, 15“Listen to me, my lord. The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver, but what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.” 16Abraham agreed to Ephron’s terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver, according to the standard of the merchants.*

19 **Genesis 23:17–20** *17So Ephron’s field at Machpelah near Mamre, the cave that was in it, and all the trees within the boundaries of the field were deeded over 18to Abraham’s possession in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of his city. 19After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field at Machpelah near Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20So the field and its cave were deeded by the Hittites to Abraham as a burial site.*

20 **Hebrews 11:13–16** *13All these people died in faith, without having received the things they were promised. However, they saw them and welcomed them from afar. And they acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14Now those who say such things show that they are seeking a country of their own. 15If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

21 **Matthew 22:31–32** *31But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what God said to you: 32‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says ‘man’, ‘he’ or ‘brothers’ where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 14: The LORD will provide

> **Memory verse:** “And Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. So to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.’” (Genesis 22:14). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See God keep His word to the very day: Isaac is born, "as He had said" (21:1), and the laugh of doubt becomes the laugh of joy.
- See the son of the slave woman sent away, and God hear the boy whose name means "God hears" and open Hagar's eyes to a well (21:17–19); see the two sons as the Bible itself pictures them (Galatians 4:28–31).
- Follow Abraham up Mount Moriah: a test from a God who never wanted human sacrifice (Jeremiah 19:5); faith that reasoned God could raise the dead (Hebrews 11:19); the ram "in place of his son"; "The LORD Will Provide"; and the Lamb God provided (John 1:29; Romans 8:32).
- See Sarah's death, Abraham's tears, and a grave bought in the promised land: faith that looks beyond death to "a better country, a heavenly one" (Hebrews 11:16).

Suggested timing (about 2 hours, or three meetings)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer. Ask the group to read Genesis 21:1–23:20 before the meeting.
- **35 min** Part 1 video (18 min); Genesis 21:1–34, with Galatians 4:28–31 and Romans 4:17.
- **40 min** Part 2 video (20 min); Genesis 22:1–19, with Hebrews 11:17–19, Romans 8:32 and John 1:29.
- **30 min** Part 3 video (16 min); Genesis 22:20–23:20, with Hebrews 11:13–16.
- **10 min** Reflection questions. Close in prayer, thanking God that He keeps His word and has provided the Lamb.

For most groups, take one part each week. If you do, read the passage for that part aloud together before the video.

Tips

- **Ishmael and Hagar** (21:8–21): treat them gently. The study does not blame Hagar, and it stresses that God heard the boy and was with him. Sarah's demand (21:10) is God-approved in its result (21:12), but nothing says it was kindly meant; do not let the group spend long judging her.
- **The two sons** (Galatians 4:28–31): the lesson is not about nations or families but about being born of the Spirit. If someone asks about the descendants of Ishmael today, keep to what the text says: God promised to make a nation of him and kept His word (25:12–16 is in the next study).
- **The command to offer Isaac** (22:1–2): the study says plainly that this was a test, that God never wanted human sacrifice, and that no one today has any reason to think God would ask such a thing. Keep it that way. If a member is troubled, point to Jeremiah 19:5, to Hebrews 11:19, and to the angel's "Do not lay a hand on the boy" (22:12). Do not let the discussion turn to guessing what Abraham felt, which the Bible does not tell us.
- **Gifts that take God's place** (Part 2, point 2): offered cautiously; the Bible does not say this about Abraham. Use it as a question for each person, not as a charge against him.
- **Moriah and Calvary** (Part 2, points 8–9): the study separates what the Bible itself says (Hebrews 11:19; Romans 8:32; John 1:29; 2 Chronicles 3:1), what many teachers have seen (the wood, the third day), and where the picture falls short (Isaac spared; the Son not). Keep these three apart in the discussion.

- **Hebrews 11 and James 2** (Part 2, point 4): Abraham was counted righteous by faith years before (15:6); here his faith is shown to be real by what he does. If the group asks about faith and works, this is the place to say that the faith that saves is never alone.
- **The price of the field** (23:16): four hundred shekels was very high. Do not press the comparison with Jeremiah's seventeen shekels; the study says we must be careful comparing prices across so many centuries.
- **Grief** (23:2): invite members who have lost someone to speak only if they wish. The lesson is that tears are not unbelief: "Jesus wept". Christians grieve, but not "like the rest, who are without hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
- **Are we ready?** (Part 3, point 10): the study closes with a personal question. Give people time, and do not press anyone to answer aloud.
- **Ask in the closing prayer** for people the group loves who have not yet seen the well: "Then God opened her eyes" (21:19). Pray that God will open their eyes.