

# **Frisco First Baptist Church**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ABRAHAM

THE LIFE OF ISAAC

GENESIS 15:1-22:19

6/7/2026

## **MAIN POINT**

We can trust God, no matter how impossible the situation, because God always keeps His promises.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you consider yourself someone who has commitment issues? Why or why not?**

**Why can it be difficult to commit to things, especially long-term? What role does doubt play in our hesitations to commit?**

**If God took something from you so that you had to live by faith in His promises, what would that likely be? Explain why this one area has been a hindrance to your living by faith in God's promises.**

God's promises may as well be scrawled in stone, preserved for all of eternity to witness. That's how confident He is that He will keep His word, but the question is never really about His confidence—it's about ours. The story of Isaac's birth and the events that preceded it remind us we can trust God, no matter how impossible the situation might seem, because God always keeps His promises.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 15:1-21.**

Many event-filled years have passed since God first made His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12. Abraham almost lost his wife to Pharaoh and the promised land to his nephew Lot. He almost lost his life and all his possessions in a war with four kings. He still had no child, the heart of God's promise in Genesis 12, and his current heir was a Syrian slave.

**Why did Abraham doubt he would ever become a father? What indicates Abraham had given up hope?**

**What does God's kind response tell us about His character and grace?**

**How did God respond to Abraham's doubts (vv. 9-10)? Why did God ask Abraham to do this?**

While grateful for God's promises, Abraham wondered about the value of the reward if he had no son to give it to. Abraham had entered Canaan at age seventy-five with Sarah, who was then sixty-five years old. Several years had passed and the couple remained childless. Abraham may have wondered if he would ever have a son. It seems as though Abraham had little hope God would actually fulfill His promises. Fear and worry were starting to creep into his heart. Abraham was persuaded by God's promises and by His power to bring them into existence. This kind of faith takes on the character of obedience. This kind of faith in God alone is credited for righteousness.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 18:1-15.

**Abraham and Sarah continued to wait for their promised child. What does the story in Genesis 18 teach us about Abraham's character?**

**Why does Sarah laugh to herself, and why do you think she then lied about it?**

**In what area of your life do you most often doubt God's power? Why is that aspect of your life most susceptible to a lack of faith?**

**When our prayers are not answered the way we want, what are our typical responses? Why?**

God often reminds us of His power when we are powerless. Financial, emotional, and spiritual strains can divide our faith as well as our families. During moments when doubt overshadows our faith, God may send messengers who remind us of His power. Abraham and Sarah entertained angels unaware. Oftentimes, believers entertain messengers thinly disguised as impossible problems where only the Lord's power can intervene. Be ready; in those moments God's power can intervene.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 21:1-7.

**Finally, the long-awaited fulfillment of God's promise came about. What does Sarah's pregnancy teach us about God? What does Sarah's pregnancy teach us about faith?**

**What does it make you think about God that He had Abraham and Sarah name their son "Laughter"?**

God is a promise-keeping God. He promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son, and when it seemed all hope was lost for that promise to come to pass, God made it happen. God is full of wonderful surprises. God knows we are fragile and that our faith can be fickle, but if we live in faith, even when it is small, God will forgive us of all our sins and fill our lives with His grace.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 22:1-18.

**Knowing God waited 25 years before providing a son for Abraham, how would you expect Abraham to react to God's instructions in verse 2? Why doesn't Abraham object?**

**What did God want from Abraham? What do you learn about Abraham based on his prompt, obedient actions?**

God tested Abraham by asking him to take his son, his only son (through whom God had said He would fulfill His promises), and to sacrifice him to God. Faced with God's difficult command, Abraham promptly obeyed.

**What is your "Isaac," your most valued treasure? What would you think if God asked you to sacrifice your Isaac?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How does this story remind you of the gospel of Jesus Christ?**

**Read 1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 2:9; and Romans 8:34. How do these verses let us know God will be faithful to fulfill His promises?**

**What are you trusting God with today? Are you anxiously or patiently waiting for God to fulfill His promises?**

## PRAYER

Close your group time in prayer, asking God to strengthen our faith and our courage to obey Him. Thank Him for sending Jesus and for the salvation available through Him. Pray that God will open our eyes to Jesus' identity and His work in our lives through this study.

## COMMENTARY

GENESIS 15:1-21

15:1. Abram's role as a prophet is shown here. Visions were one of two standard means (the other was dreams) by which the Lord revealed His word to people. The only other patriarch who is said to have received a vision was Jacob. The vision's content included a command (Do not be afraid), an assurance (I am your shield), and a promise (your very great reward). The Lord would reward him richly.

15:2-3. Neither God's protection nor His reward seemed important to elderly Abram since all his goods would go to Eliezer of Damascus, a slave born in his house. Engaging in something of a pity party, Abram made seven references to himself (in the Hebrew) in the space of twenty-two Hebrew words and twice utters the complaint that he was childless.

15:4-6. Ignoring Abram's apparent lack of gratitude, the Lord gave Abram one of the great promises of the Bible; the elderly patriarch would produce an heir from his own body. God then made the breathtaking promise that Abram's offspring would be as numerous as the stars. Old and childless, Abram believed the Lord, that is, he affirmed that God is dependable. God credited it to him as righteousness, that is, He judged or accounted that Abram measured up to the standard, conformed to the norm. Abram's faith and God's gracious response to it served as a paradigm of the Christian experience in three different New Testament books (Rm 4:3; Gal 3:6; Jms 2:23).

15:8-9. Abram, the shrewd businessman who had once dealt with earth's mightiest human—the pharaoh of Egypt (12:14-19)—now negotiated with the Lord God. How can he be assured of God's promise? Verse 9 provides the answer. God provided assurance in the form of a solemn commitment ceremony. The cow, female goat, and ram were mammals later authorized for sacrifice in the Law of Moses; however, this is the only time that three-year-olds—specimens in the prime of their lives—were used. Turtledoves and young pigeons were permitted for certain Israelite sacrifices (Lv 5:7). The ceremony here differs from other sacred rituals in the Old Testament involving animals in that no animal parts were burned.

15:17. When the sun had set, the Lord caused a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch to appear and pass between the divided animals. Both elements symbolized essential aspects of God; the smoke perhaps representing divine inscrutability, and the flame God's power. By going between the divided carcasses, the Lord was solemnly obligating Himself to fulfill the terms of the covenant—symbolically indicating that He would Himself be split asunder if He failed to carry out His promises.

## GENESIS 18:1-15

18:1. For the third time in Abraham's life the Lord appeared to him (12:7; 17:1). Mamre, near Hebron, was Abraham's preferred abode in Canaan (13:18; 14:13). This divine encounter must have taken place within three months after the events of the previous chapter.

18:2-8. Abraham is presented as the ideal host. He sees three men—actually God and two angels (19:1)—to whom he eagerly extended greeting and showed proper respect by calling them “my lords” (Hb ‘adonai; a term that can refer to God) and bowing to the ground. Then he provided water, rest, and a feast that included bread baked from 21 quarts of flour. Abraham's behavior shows him to be a better host than Lot (19:1-3).

18:9-10. In keeping with western Asian customs still practiced in traditional Muslim culture today, the host's wife was not permitted to be in the presence of male visitors. But since her tent walls were thin and the conversation was interesting, Sarah was listening to every word. During or after the meal the Lord confirmed the promise made in 17:21, that in about a year's time... Sarah would already have given birth to a son. This promise was fulfilled (21:1-2).

18:11-15. For the sixth time in the Abraham narratives the writer emphasizes the advanced ages of Abraham and Sarah (12:4; 16:16; 17:1,17,24). Sarah's laughter

expressed her skepticism, but the Lord, who heard her laugh and knew her heart, reminded Abraham and Sarah through the use of a rhetorical question that nothing is impossible for the Lord.

## GENESIS 21:1-7

21:1-2. The setting is Abraham's household where the early days of Isaac's birth and circumcision are recalled. Verses 1-7 consist of a birth narrative (vv. 1-4) and the exultation of Sarah at the birth of her child in Abraham's old age (vv. 5-7). Verses 1-2 describe the visitation of the Lord, resulting in the miraculous pregnancy of Sarah who bears a son "to Abraham in his old age" (vv. 2, 7). Verse 1 possesses parallel half-lines, emphasizing the faithfulness of the divine word revealed to Abraham and Sarah (17:16, 19; 18:10, 14). Not only was Sarah's pregnancy impossible by human resources alone, but the birth was at the "very time" promised.

21:3-4 Verses 3-4 describe Abraham's obedient response at Isaac's birth: he names (17:16) and circumcises the child on the eighth day (17:10, 12, 19) precisely as the Lord had directed.

21:5-7 This paragraph ties together the explanation of Isaac's name and the elderly age of the parents. Dual references to the age of Abraham form the boundaries of the passage (vv. 5a, 7b). Abraham, the narration clarifies, is a century of years (v. 5), and Sarah radiates with happiness at the thought she bears Isaac to her husband "in his old age" (v. 7b).

## GENESIS 22:1-18

22:1-2. Abraham's ultimate test of obedience to God is described in 22:1-19. God used this event to affirm the sterling character of Abraham's faith by giving him the incredibly difficult task of sacrificing his son Isaac. Pagans in Canaan during the OT period regularly practiced child sacrifice by making them pass through the fire (2Ki 16:3) to give them as food to their gods (Ezek 23:37). With this command God was asking Abraham to demonstrate that he was as committed to the Lord God as pagans were to their gods.

22:3-4. Confirmation of Abraham's amazing trust in God is found first in the fact that he was up before sunrise (early in the morning) the next day to begin the journey. His diligence in going to the place God had told him about contrasts sharply with Jonah's actions (Jnh 1:3). Traveling from Beer-sheba, it was not until the third day that Abraham reached the Jerusalem area.

22:5-8. Evidence that Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:17-18) is found in his comment, we'll come back. Abraham carried the most dangerous elements of the sacrifice—the fire and the sacrificial knife—himself, perhaps as a sign of his protective love for Isaac. Ignorant of God's command and surprised that his father would forget the most important element in an animal sacrifice, Isaac asked Abraham where the lamb was. Abraham's faith-filled response was that God Himself would provide the lamb ("sheep").

22:9-14. Abraham followed the standard procedure for a burnt offering involving a living being. In describing his preparation, the Bible emphasizes only Abraham's systematic acts of obedience, omitting any mention of Abraham's or Isaac's feelings. Just before the knife was put to Isaac's neck, the Angel of the Lord spared him. The patriarch had passed the test, providing experiential evidence that he feared God more than he loved his only son. Exactly as Abraham had predicted (v. 8), God had miraculously provided a sheep—and the most prized variety, a ram. To memorialize the event Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide.

22:15-18. As the Angel of the Lord who had the Lord's authority, the divine emissary delivered a second message (v. 12), this one in the first person. Because Abraham had passed the "priorities test" by obeying God and not withholding his only son, the Lord would indeed bless him with offspring, victory, land, and goodwill.