

April 2017
Volume 28:4

Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids

FAITH



CAN'T Get Much STRONGER Than That!

DAVE MILLER

YOU'VE PROBABLY READ OR HEARD THE STORY OF ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC IN GENESIS 22. THE

Bible says that "God **tested** Abraham." "Tested" means that God was giving Abraham an opportunity to have his faith in Him made visible so that he could realize the strength of his own faith in God. God never intended to have Abraham kill his son. But when Satan "tests" people, he is trying to "trip them up" and get them to give in to sin, like when he tempted Jesus in Matthew 4. **But God never does that!** "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone" (James 1:13). God wants everyone to

be saved, so He would never tempt a person to try to get him to sin. Keep in mind, also, that God already knows how we will react to those moments when we are being tested.

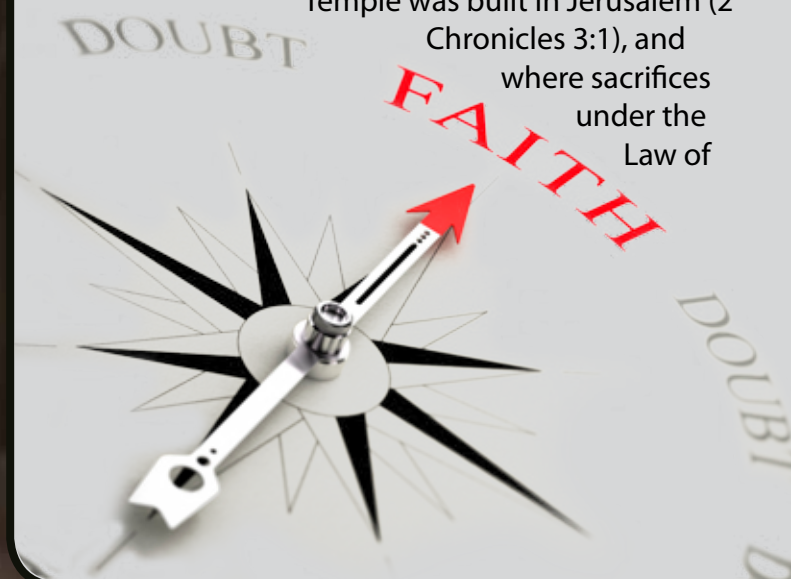
Abraham's faith in God was so strong that he got up early the next morning, made the preparations for the offering, and headed out with his son Isaac and two others to go to the place that God would show him. On the third day of travel, Abraham arrived in the area and told the two young men to stay with the donkey while he and Isaac went further in order to worship God. Being an obedient son, Isaac went right along with his father, carrying the wood for the burnt offering. In fact, when they arrived at the sacrificial site, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood on the altar, and bound Isaac and laid him on the altar—yet Isaac complied with his father's actions. When Abraham raised his hand to kill his son, the angel of the Lord spoke from heaven and ordered him not to harm his son. The angel noted how Abraham's willingness to offer his son was proof that he respected God and was willing to obey Him.

Think about how Abraham's strong faith was seen in three ways: (1) he told the young men who traveled with them to remain with the donkey and he **and Isaac** would "come back," showing that Abraham believed that Isaac would survive the sacrifice; (2) when Isaac asked where the lamb was that would serve as the sacrifice, Abraham answered, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering," suggesting that Abraham did not believe God intended for Isaac to be killed, but would provide a lamb; and (3) we learn something about what Abraham was thinking—what was actually going on in his mind—when the Hebrews writer stated Abraham had concluded "that God was able to raise

him up, even from the dead" (11:19). In other words, knowing that Isaac was the son that God promised through whom a great nation would arise, even if Abraham killed the boy, God would simply raise him from the dead! Wow! That's incredible trust in God! Indeed, Paul explained that Abraham "did not **waver** at the promise of God through unbelief, but was **strengthened in faith**...and being **fully convinced** that what He had promised He was also able to perform" (Romans 4:20-21).

Isn't it amazing how God planned for historical events to foreshadow His incredible plan to bring Jesus into the world and offer Him as a substitute Lamb for our sins!? Think about these five: (1) Isaac carried the wood that was to be used for his death, even as Jesus carried His own cross; (2) Abraham saw a ram caught in a nearby thicket by its horns and used this sheep as a substitute sacrifice, even as God used Jesus as a substitute sheep for us—as John announced: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29); (3) Some think that the Moriah where Abraham offered Isaac (Genesis 22:2) was the same Moriah where the Temple was built in Jerusalem (2

Chronicles 3:1), and where sacrifices under the Law of



Moses were carried out. The same location is also linked to Jesus' death when the Temple curtain was torn from top to bottom at the moment Jesus died (Matthew 27:51); (4) Isaac is said to be Abraham's "only begotten" son (Hebrews 11:17)—the same word used to describe Jesus (John 3:16); (5) And did you notice that when the Hebrews writer tells us that Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead, that is precisely what He did with the body of Jesus?!

Abraham had **strong** faith. Faith and trust in God can't get much stronger than his faith. James also commented: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?" (2:21-22). You and I can have that kind of faith, too—if we will study God's Word and then take God at His Word (Romans 10:17).

FAITH



ENTERTAINING ANGELS

JEFF MILLER

ON A HOT DAY, ABRAHAM SAT AT THE DOOR OF HIS TENT. WHEN HE LOOKED UP, THREE MEN STOOD BESIDE HIM.

Being a thoughtful man, he immediately acted hospitably to the three strangers. He begged them to rest under the nearby trees and allow him to bring them food and water. Abraham had one of his servants prepare an expensive meal for the guests.

At this point, Abraham apparently did not know that the men were actually two angels as well as the Lord (Genesis 19:1; Hebrews 13:2). When the Bible describes angels on Earth, they did not have wings as many portray them. Instead, they had the appearance of male humans (Genesis 18:2). After telling Abraham that Sarah would soon have a child, Abraham certainly would have known who he was entertaining.

God told Abraham that they were going to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The cities were filled with extremely wicked men (Genesis 13:13). Abraham knew that God would destroy the cities for their wickedness. The two angels left and went towards Sodom, but Abraham, surely thinking about his nephew Lot who lived in Sodom, asked the Lord if He would spare Sodom if there were 50 good people in it. God said He would. Abraham asked again and again—"What if there were 45?" "What if there were 40? 30? 20? 10?" God said He would spare Sodom for the sake of 10 righteous people. Abraham may have thought that if there were not 10, then the city did indeed deserve to be destroyed. Regardless, he stopped asking at 10. But surely there would be at least 10 good people—after all, Lot, his wife, two unmarried daughters (Genesis 19:8), and other daughters with their husbands (Genesis 19:14) lived in Sodom.

Sadly, the two angels did not find even 10 righteous



ARTIST'S RENDITION OF THE BURNING OF SODOM

people. So God destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other surrounding cities for their wickedness. The influence of those wicked cities even caused Lot to lose his wife, sons-in-law, and apparently some of his daughters. The two surviving daughters had clearly also been influenced in a bad way by living in such a wicked city (Genesis 19:30-36). If only Lot had thought through the spiritual danger of "pitching his tent" towards Sodom instead of, like Abraham, staying away from those wicked cities (Genesis 13:12). "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

ABRAHAM Leaves a City to Go CAMPING

KYLE BUTT

HAVE YOU EVER GONE CAMPING? MAYBE YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO "ROUGH IT" OUT IN

the "wild" with just a tent and a few supplies. Some people, however, don't really enjoy camping. The main reason is that there are so many luxuries that you don't normally have at a campsite. A camping tent is a decent shelter, but when it rains it is difficult to stay dry. Furthermore, campsites rarely have electricity, bathrooms, showers, or refrigerators. Camping can be fun, but most people only want to do it for a brief time and then return to their nice, warm, dry, cozy homes.

What does all this about camping have to do with Abraham? When we first read about Abraham, he and his family are living in Ur of the Chaldeans (Genesis 11:27-31). Have you ever thought about what the city of Ur might have been like? Most of the time, when we think about people living long ago, we may think of them living in small huts or houses in little villages. That is not what archaeology tells us Ur was like.

From what we can tell, Ur was one of the largest cities in the world during the time of Abraham. It most likely had tens of thousands of people. Houses have been uncovered that were two-story homes with 10 or more rooms. In one section of Ur, tombs have been discovered that contain huge amounts of gold, silver, statues, jewelry, and pottery. Also, there is a huge



building called a Ziggurat that was most likely used as a temple to worship the false moon god named Nanna. In our way of thinking, Ur was like the New York City of the ancient world.

God called Abraham to leave his home and wander through the land of Canaan. Abraham and his family would be leaving the luxuries of the city and dwelling in tents. They would not have a nice, two-story home in Canaan. Instead, Abraham and Sarah would be constantly on the move.

The Bible tells us why Abraham was willing to do this. You see, he did not consider Ur or Haran or any other place on Earth to be his home. The book of Hebrews explains that Abraham sought a heavenly "homeland" and considered himself a pilgrim (or wanderer) on Earth (Hebrews 11:13-16). Like Abraham, we should all remember that this world is not our final home, but we are looking forward to heaven.

ACTIVITY PAGES



SOLVE, FIND, AND CIRCLE

J X Y H J W O U L W
Z C Q I S W A D K I
K O N V V G B D Q K
Q I Z G D I E C A F
N A S L X B M X V M
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R M T U U B Z X A E
K O Y R J V R R D V
L X M A F E A J N E
K E G T C S D Y S N

TRUE OR FALSE

- _____ Ur was likely one of the largest cities in the world during the time of Abraham.
- _____ Only one angel came to Abraham to inform him that his wife would give birth to a son.
- _____ Abraham sought a heavenly homeland.
- _____ God was sorry that Abraham did not kill his son.
- _____ God gave Abraham an opportunity to have his faith in Him made visible so that he could realize the strength of his own faith in God.
- _____ When Satan "tests" people, he wants people to sin, like when he tempted Jesus.
- _____ Like Abraham, we should all remember that this world is our final home.
- _____ It would have been very easy for Abraham and his family to leave Ur of the Chaldeans for Canaan.

ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

- Explain in specific ways how Abraham demonstrated his strong faith.
- Discuss God's longsuffering in the days leading up to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

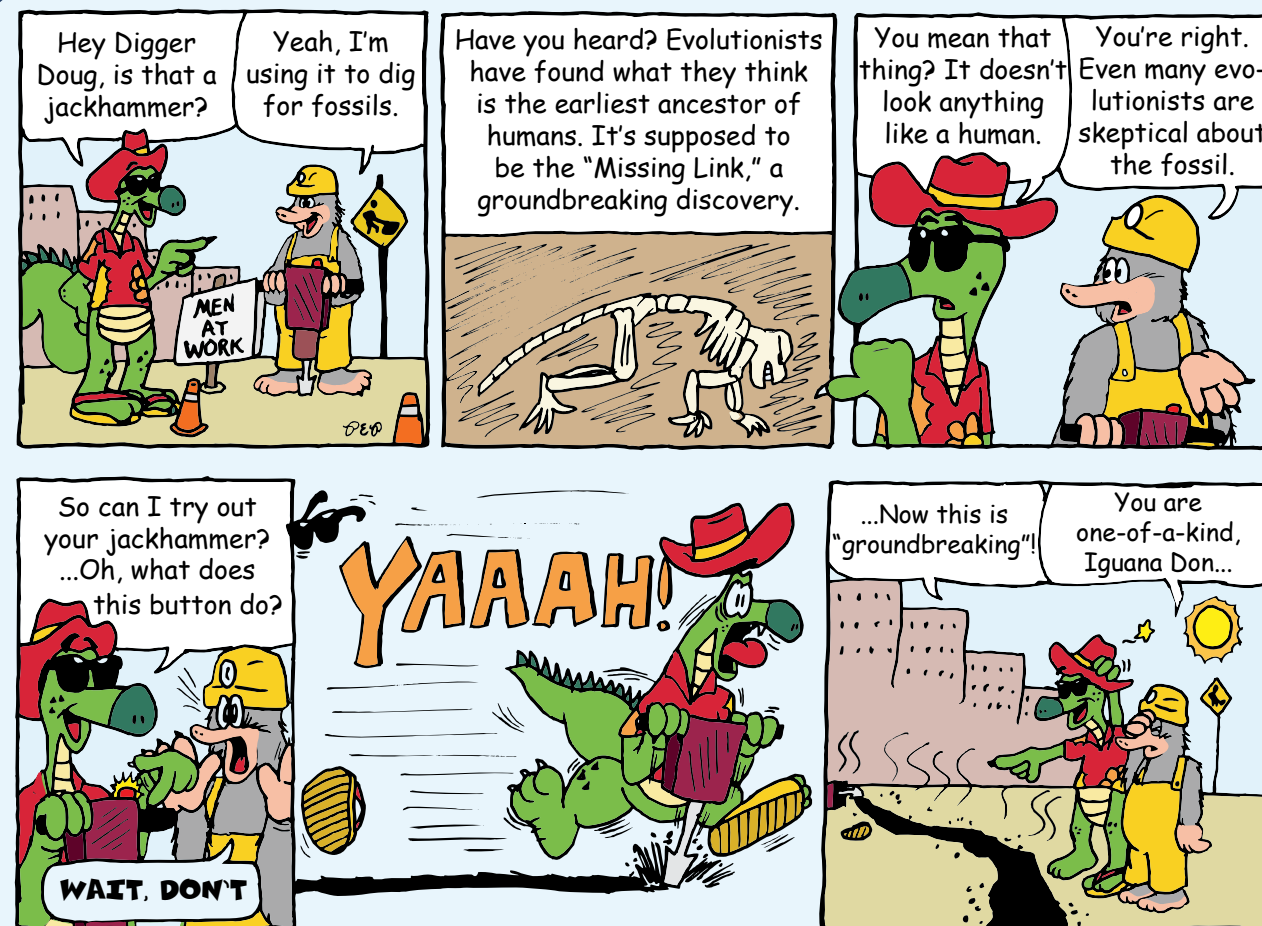


FILL IN THE BIBLE VERSES (NKJV)

- "Do not be _____: 'Evil company _____ good habits'" (1 Corinthians 15:33).
- "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by _____'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself _____ anyone" (James 1:13).
- "Was not Abraham our father _____ by works when he offered _____ his son on the altar? Do you see that _____ was working together with his _____, and by works faith was made perfect?" (2:21-22).



- Abraham's half-sister. _____
- Abraham's nephew. _____
- An advanced city in which Abraham once lived. _____
- "The mother of all living." _____
- A huge building in Ur that was most likely used as a temple to worship false gods. _____
- God called Abraham to leave his home and wander through this land. _____
- City in which Lot lived. _____
- The first man. _____
- Abraham's promised son. _____





APOLOGETICS PRESS, INC.

230 Landmark Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117

(800) 234-8558 (Orders)
(334) 272-8558

DiscoveryMagazine.com

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Montgomery, AL
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ABRAHAM, SARAH, AND TWO CONFUSING QUESTIONS

ERIC LYONS

SOMETIMES THE BIBLE REVEALS INFORMATION THAT IS, AT FIRST, PUZZLING TO US—THINGS LIKE “HOW WAS there light before the Sun was created?” or “How could Methuselah live to be almost 1,000 years old?” Another couple of baffling questions surround Abraham and Sarah.

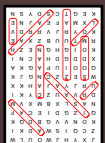
First, many have wondered, “If Sarah was Abraham’s half-sister (and she was—Genesis 20:12), why did God approve of their marriage? Doesn’t the Old Testament teach that it was sinful for ‘near of kin’ to marry (Leviticus 18:6)?”

Indeed, when the Law of Moses was given to the Israelites, God forbade them from marrying close relatives. But remember that Abraham lived hundreds of years **before** the Mosaic Law was given. Prior to Moses, people **could lawfully marry** close family members. In fact, think about Adam, the first man, and Eve, “the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). Their children had to marry each other if Eve was the mother of all living. Furthermore, following the Flood, the entire Earth was repopulated by Noah and his family. You see, in the beginning God allowed close kin to marry. But God knew that during that time, relatively few (if any) harmful genetic traits existed. Unlike today, at that time there was very little physical

danger in close (genetically similar) family members marrying and having children.

Another question that people sometimes ask about Sarah is, “How could she have been so beautiful at nearly 90 years of age?” Genesis 20 makes it clear that Abimelech, king of Gerar, was quite interested in Sarah in her old age. Would he really have been dazzled by a woman who was 90? First, we are not informed of the age of Abimelech. It could be that he was around 90 himself. Second, people generally lived longer in Abraham’s day than today. Abraham’s dad died at 205 (Genesis 11:32). Abraham lived to be 175 (Genesis 25:7). The point is: Sarah, at age 90, may have looked like a beautiful 50-year-old woman today. (And, there are still plenty of 50+ year-old women today whom kings and other world leaders find very attractive.)

In short, neither of these two initially confusing Bible questions present any kind of problem. Both can be answered scripturally and reasonably.



ANSWERS

TRUE OR FALSE: 1. T; 2. F; 3. T; 4. F; 5. T; 6. T; 7. F; 8. F. SOLVE: FIND, AND CIRCLE: 1. Sarah; 2. Lot; 3. Ur; 4. Eve; 5. Zigurab; 6. Canaan; 7. Sodom; 8. Adam; 9. Isaac. FILL IN THE BIBLE VERSES: 1. deceived, corrupt; 2. God, tempt; 3. justified, Isaac, faith, works.

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