

connect 360

BIBLE TEACHING GUIDE

Rescue & Redemption

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Rescue and Redemption—Connect 360 Bible Teaching Guide

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How to Make the Best Use of This *Teaching Guide*

Leading a class in studying the Bible is a sacred trust. This *Teaching Guide* has been prepared to help you as you give your best to this important task.

In each lesson, you will find first “Bible Comments” for teachers, to aid you in your study and preparation. The three sections of “Bible Comments” are “Understanding the Context,” “Interpreting the Scriptures,” and “Focusing on the Meaning.” “Understanding the Context” provides a summary overview of the entire background passage that also sets the passage in the context of the Bible book being studied. “Interpreting the Scriptures” provides verse-by-verse comments on the focal passage. “Focusing on the Meaning” offers help with the meaning and application of the focal text.

The second main part of each lesson is “Teaching Plans.” You’ll find two complete teaching plans in this section. The first is called the “Discovery Plan,” which emphasizes discovery learning techniques; and the second is called the “Discussion Plan,” which provides questions and suggestions for dialogue about the Scriptures. Choose the plan that best fits your class and your style of teaching. You may also use and adapt ideas from both. Each plan is intended to be practical, helpful, and immediately useful as you prepare to teach.

The major headings in each teaching plan are intended to help you sequence how you teach so as to follow the flow of how people tend to learn. The first major heading, “Connect with Life,” provides ideas that will help you begin the class session where your class is and draw your class into the study. The second major heading, “Guide Bible Study,” offers suggestions for helping your class engage the Scriptures actively and develop a greater understanding of this portion of the Bible’s message. The third major heading, “Encourage Application,” is meant to help participants focus on how to respond with their lives to this message.

As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. You might use one or more of the following methods:

- In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents in their *Study Guides* and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date on which each lesson will be studied.
- If all of your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
- Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.baptistwaypress.org under the “Teacher Helps” tab.
- Develop a sticker with the lesson dates, and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.

Here are some steps you can take to help you prepare well to teach each lesson and save time in doing so:

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers meet for lesson overview and preparation, plan to participate. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers don’t have this planning time now, look for ways to begin. You, your fellow teachers, and your church will benefit from this mutual encouragement and preparation.
3. Overview the study in the *Study Guide*. Look at the table of contents, and see where this lesson fits in the overall study. Then read or review the study introduction to the book that is being studied.
4. Consider carefully the suggested Main Idea, Question to Explore, and Teaching Aim. These can help you discover the main thrust of this particular lesson.
5. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. Using your Bible in your study and in the class session

can provide a positive model to class members to use their own Bibles and give more attention to Bible study themselves. (Each writer of the Bible comments in both the *Teaching Guide* and the *Study Guide* has chosen a favorite translation. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translations chosen, of course.)

6. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the Bible comments in the *Study Guide*. The Bible comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible. Read also the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and you can also use them in the class session itself. Continue your Bible study with the aid of the Bible comments included in this *Teaching Guide*.
7. Review the "Teaching Plans" in this *Teaching Guide*. Consider how these suggestions would help you teach this Bible passage in your class to accomplish the teaching aim.
8. Consider prayerfully the needs of your class, and think about how to teach so you can help your class learn best.
9. Develop and follow a lesson plan based on the suggestions in this *Teaching Guide*, with alterations as needed for your class.
10. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.

Premium Commentary. Plan to get the additional Bible study comments available online. Visit our website, call 1-866-249-1799, or e-mail baptistway@texasbaptists.org to order the *Premium Commentary*. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website. The price of these comments is \$5 per person. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Commentary* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see www.baptistwaypress.org for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.

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FREE! Downloadable teaching resource items for use in your class are available at www.baptistwaypress.org. Watch for them in the “Teaching Plans” for each lesson. Then go online to www.baptistwaypress.org and click on “Teaching Resource Items” under the “Teacher Helps” tab for this study. These items are selected from the “Teaching Plans.” They are provided online to make lesson preparation easier for handouts and similar items. Permission is granted to download these teaching resource items, print them out, copy them as needed, and use them in your class.

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Rescue and Redemption

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lesson **1**

The Lord Will Provide

MAIN IDEA

God revealed his rescue and redemption in response to Abraham's demonstration of faith.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

How deep is your trust in God?

TEACHING AIM

To lead adults to deepen their trust in God through faithful actions



Bible Comments

Understanding the Context

Genesis, the Book of Beginnings, reveals narratives expounding God’s work in Creation, along with humankind’s fall and redemption. In a sense, the entire Bible repeats this theme: Creation, humankind’s fall, and God’s redeeming work to save and to rescue individuals. The early narratives communicate the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah, and the patriarchs of the nation of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob play central roles in the Book of Genesis. God made a covenant with Abraham, which included telling the patriarch that he should not fear because God would shield him, that a son who was his own flesh and blood would come from Abraham’s lineage, and that he would father a great nation (Gen. 12, 15). Genesis 16–21 reveals the drama of a ratified covenant—a fiery torch passed between two pieces of the animals of sacrifice—and introduces the covenant of circumcision. Also, the coming birth of a child is announced with a word from the Lord, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Gen. 18:14).

Abraham, almost 100-years-old, feared himself too elderly to sire a child. Given her age, Sarah laughed at the idea. However, Abraham believed God in the end, as was his habit, and Sarah birthed a child who became Abraham’s heir. They named him Isaac, which means “he laughs.” The miraculous birth of Isaac made Abraham’s test in Genesis 22 appear bizarre and puzzling in every way.¹

Interpreting the Scriptures

The Task (22:1–2)

22:1–2. The phrase, “God tested Abraham,” holds the key to understanding Genesis 22. The Scripture passage is simultaneously obscure and definite: obscure because of the nature of God’s request for Abraham to sacrifice

Isaac, his only true heir; and definite because in the reality of the story, a clear message follows—the power of faith in God.

James 2:21–24 further explains the testing. James highlighted three vital elements of Abraham’s life. First, Abraham lived a righteous life, quick to obedience and trust in God. Abraham’s response to God in Genesis 12 and his response, “Here I am,” in Genesis 22:1, indicated his eagerness and willingness to follow God in steps of obedience.

Second, Abraham possessed a unique and determined faith, demonstrated by the fact God told him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, after God had promised to fulfill an earlier promise to bless all the nations through the birth of a son. Abraham had faith, according to James, that produced works of righteousness. James wrote, “You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did” (James 2:22–23).

Abraham’s unique faith equipped him to listen to God and obey. His determined faith motivated him to serve God unflinchingly, without doubt or a multitude of questions. Abraham, full of steadfast faith, believed God could raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). If Abraham doubted or questioned God, Scripture does not record it. He possessed unwavering faith in God.

Third, Abraham received a special designation: God’s friend (James 2:23). Friends have an open, mutual, and trusting relationship.

The Test (22:3–19)

God told Abraham to take Isaac to Mount Moriah. Bible scholars specify Mount Moriah as the Temple Mount location and the site where Solomon’s temple once stood (2 Chronicles 3:1). However, no biblical mapping identifies the exact location of Mount Moriah. One can translate the Hebrew term *Moriah* and conclude that it means “to fear.” Moriah offered a time and place of renewed fear of God (reverence) for both for Abraham and Isaac.

Ultimately, God’s tested Abraham, choosing him for a particular task as proof of the patriarch’s faith. The testing strengthened Abraham’s faith and inspired his actions. His act of faith birthed a stronger faith.

22:3–8. Abraham and Isaac saddled a donkey and took his two servants to a site on the mountain. Abraham then instructed his two servants to remain where they were while he and Isaac, wood in tow, went elsewhere to worship. A burnt offering (22:2) indicated an act of solemn devotion, dedication, and submission to God. The smoke wafting into the sky symbolized the sweet scent of a sacrifice pleasing to the nostrils and heart of God. The term “worship” in verse 5 indicates falling before God in reverence as an act of humble adoration accompanied by faithful confession.

Humility begets worship and worship begets humility. Heartfelt confession acknowledges a need for God, gratitude for his faithfulness, and a pledge to trust in God by the act of worship.

Do not miss Abraham’s words to the two servants, “then *we* will come back to you (22:5).” The pronoun “we” revealed Abraham’s faith and indicates his steps of righteousness and obedience. “We” provides insight into the trust factor of Abraham’s relationship and friendship with God.

Isaac carried the wood to the spot of sacrifice. Abraham brought the knife and fire for starting the burnt sacrifice. Isaac asked his father, “Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

Abraham replied, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son” (22:8).

The sentence, “And the two of them went on together (22:8),” indicates the silence that ensued on the journey to the place of sacrifice. One senses the anxiety Abraham must have felt and the drama of what would transpire.

At this point in the text, some Bible scholars seek to explain details about the sacrifice. Child sacrifice an act of worship was not uncommon in Abraham’s day. Worshipers of Molech believed the god required such sacrifice. However, the Book of Leviticus explicitly forbids child sacrifice (Lev. 18:21; 20:2). Some Bible scholars maintain Abraham’s test involved God’s rejection of child sacrifice. Such thoughts appear well-reasoned but more than likely do not fit the context of Genesis 22.

Bible scholars also seek to understand the idea of giving up something for God and giving back to God what was already his. Indeed, Abraham gave up his son for God, and this kind of action is right and necessary in the venture of faith; however, Genesis 22 focuses on Abraham’s faith and God’s response.

Likewise, Abraham gave back his son to the God who had given the boy to him and Sarah. After all, God said to Abraham of Sarah,

“I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” (Gen. 16:16–17).

Giving back to God what is already his demands good stewardship and is again a necessary act of faith, but Genesis 22 focuses on God’s activity, his work in Abraham’s life, and his purpose for eternity through Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 12).

22:9–19. Two dynamic words, “promise” and “provision,” invite deeper insight into Genesis 22:1–19. God made a promise to Abraham using a covenant. God pledged to be Abraham’s shield and reward, he affirmed that Abraham would have an heir to fulfill the covenant of Genesis 12 (“I will make you a great nation...and bless all peoples.” See also Galatians 3:6–9). God promised to give Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan, known as the promised land (Gen. 15:1–21; Heb. 11:9).

God’s promises to Abraham in Genesis 12, 15, and 17:19 are affirmed by the events in Genesis 22. The Book of Hebrews notes that Abraham had these promises from God, superior to those of Moses, and that Abraham received or “welcomed” the promises by faith (Heb. 7:6; 8:6; 11:17; Gal. 3:16). Genesis 17:19–20 clarifies this when it says, “Then God said, ‘Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.’”

Ultimately the promises to Abraham were ratified by a covenant, that is, a pledge of trust from God and an agreement of faith between God and Abraham. This ratified covenant took place in Genesis 15:17 and would be established as an everlasting agreement (Gen. 17:7).

As to provision, Genesis 22, in its purest and most potent interpretation, signals God’s endowment. God provided an heir through Isaac. God also provided for Abraham a covenant-pledge agreement which God in his

faithfulness fulfilled. God provided an immediate sacrifice (a ram) and an ultimate sacrifice for the future, Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1:29: 1:36; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

The story unfolded dramatically. Abraham built an altar, set the wood on it, bound Isaac, and placed him on the altar (Gen. 22:9). Abraham reached out his hand, with a knife in his grip, and prepared to slay his son. An angel cried out, "Abraham! Abraham!" (22:11). Abraham's response, consistent with an earlier reply and his readiness to listen to God, proved clear: "Here I am" (22:1; 22:11).

"Do not touch your son," the angel proclaimed, adding, "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (22:12).

God provided a ram for the sacrifice on the altar, and Abraham named the place "Jehovah Jireh," translated, "The Lord Will Provide." God reaffirmed Abraham's righteousness, faith, and trust in him. Finally, God reiterated the covenant-promise of blessing, and Abraham and Isaac returned to the two servants and then home (22:19).

Some Bible scholars view the entire fantastic scene of Genesis 22 as a foreshadowing of Jesus' death on the cross when God offered his "one and only son" to be sacrificed for the sins of humankind (John 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).

Focusing on the Meaning

Genesis 22 primarily communicates how God tests the faith of his followers and is faithful to provide for his children of the promise (Romans 9:8). "Jehovah Jireh" (God provides) rings true in the symphony of following Christ. I think of three distinct times when God provided for me.

One involved a financial miracle when all seemed hopeless. Another time, I felt an intense sense of despair, and God provided an open door, renewal, and fresh hope. A third time, my wife had cancer and God provided doctors, medicine, and his touch to heal her. Life's downward pull necessitates occasions of God's unusual upward pull, whereby he delivers, redeems, rescues, and provides.

An old axiom goes, “When one door closes, another opens.” God in his provision closed the door on Isaac’s death to use him to provide life for future generations. God as provider often closes doors to open others. God provided for Abraham and Isaac, and he continues to provide for his children today.

Teaching Plans

DISCOVERY PLAN

Connect with Life

1. Before class time, place a large piece of paper on a focal wall and write the phrase “Faith is...” at the top. As class members arrive, direct them to write a definition or example of faith on the paper. To begin the Bible study, review the answers and point out the differences and nuances in the various meanings.

Say, This is the first lesson in a series of lessons on aspects of God’s rescue and redemption. Today’s lesson will show us how God provided for one family of faith.

Guide Bible Study

2. Before class time, recruit someone to perform a monologue as if he were Abraham retelling the story found in Genesis 22:1–19. Instruct him to include information about God’s earlier promise to give Abraham a son (Gen. 17:15–16). (Give the volunteer a copy of the *Study Guide* beforehand for a more thorough understanding of the story.) Encourage the performer to tell the story as found in Scripture, but also include emotions and questions Abraham may have had.

After the monologue, thank your volunteer. Say, We’ve heard the story from a first-person perspective. Now, let’s look closer at today’s focal passage as we consider how God might be asking us to deepen our trust in him.

3. Read Genesis 22:3–10 aloud. Lead the class to respond to the following questions:
 - What emotions do you think Abraham felt?
 - What questions do you think Abraham had?
 - What do these verses show us about Abraham’s faith?
 - What do these verses tell us about Isaac’s faith?

- Do questions and doubts show a lack of faith in God? Why or why not?

Say, *Faith does not automatically eliminate doubts and fears. Faith is acting in obedience despite those doubts and fears.*

4. Before class time, write the following statements on large, individual strips of paper:
 - An angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham.
 - The angel of the Lord told Abraham not to lay a hand on the boy.
 - The angel said Abraham feared God because he was willing to sacrifice his only son.
 - Abraham saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns.
 - Abraham sacrificed the ram as a burnt offering.
 - Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide.”
 - The angel affirmed God’s promise to make Abraham’s descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky.
 - Abraham and his servants returned to Beersheba.

Post these statement strips in random order on the walls of your meeting space. Call on a volunteer to read Genesis 22:11–19 aloud. Direct class members to put the strips in the correct sequence according to the story.

Encourage Application

5. Before class time, invite someone to share a personal testimony of when God called her to an act of obedience, faith, and sacrifice despite fears, unanswered questions, and an unknown end. Provide sufficient time for the individual to tell the story and then allow class members to ask questions.
6. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a copy of the following questions to discuss. (A copy of these questions is available in Teaching Resource Items for this study at www.baptistwaypress.org).
 - What in your life would be the most difficult to let go or sacrifice to respond in faith to God?
 - How do you determine when a calling is the voice of God? How do you know when it’s not the voice of God?

- When was the last time you obeyed God in doing something unexpected? What happened?
- What was the last thing God asked you to do that you have not yet done?
- When have you experienced God as the great provider?

To end the session, encourage groups to pray for each person to do what God has asked them to do.

DISCUSSION PLAN

Connect with Life

1. Read aloud the opening story in the *Study Guide*. Ask, *If you walked across the desert for hours without water and saw this, what would you do?* After discussion, say, *The dilemma illustrates what it is sometimes like to live by faith. It means letting go of what is certain to receive something greater. Today's Scripture story demonstrates that fact.*

Guide Bible Study

2. Before class time, create a large poster with the following outline of the lesson and place the poster on a focal wall.
 - The Initial Test (Gen. 22:1–2)
 - The Faithful Response (22:3–10)
 - The Supernatural Provision (22:11–19)
3. Enlist a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 22:1–2. Call attention to the first point on the outline poster. Say, *Today's lesson focuses on Abraham and Isaac, but the story goes back earlier to when God promised Abraham (then Abram) an heir. God provided Isaac, but God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. Modern-day readers know the outcome of this story, but Abraham did not know how the events would play out.*
4. Recruit a class member to read Genesis 22:3–10 aloud. Refer to the second point on the poster. Using the *Study Guide* and information in this *Teaching Guide*, give a mini-lecture on what occurred in these verses.

Say, *Abraham faithfully responded to God's command. Ask, What do you imagine Abraham was thinking as he prepared for the trip to the mountain? What do you think was going on in Isaac's mind, especially as his father bound him and put him on the altar?*

5. Read Genesis 22:11–19 aloud and call attention to the last point of the poster. Provide a short discussion of the verses, highlighting how God provided the ram in the thicket at just the right time. Ask, *Why did God wait until that moment to stop Abraham? Say, God reemphasized his promise to Abraham that his lineage would outnumber the stars in the sky and the sands of the ocean.*

Encourage Application

6. Refer members to the “Questions” section of the *Study Guide*. Encourage them to respond to each of the questions in light of what they learned in class.
7. Instruct class members to read the *Study Guide* sidebar “The Akedah in the New Testament.” Say, *Abraham's binding of Isaac is often referred to as “The Akedah” in Judaism and remains an essential instructional piece for Jews today. Ask, Today, what is God asking you to give, sacrifice, or do as an act of faith and obedience? Give the class a few minutes to share. Close in prayer.*

Notes

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 1-4 are from the New International Version (1984 edition).