

Because Abraham Obeyed?



Sermon Text

Genesis 26:1-5



Big Idea

The obedience of Abraham and the blessing that flows out to others because of it pictures and prepares us for the obedience of Jesus and the salvation that will come to us by grace through faith in Him.

(1) Pressing Questions

The two underlying questions that pressed in on me as I came to these verses were: (1) How do I receive blessing from God? How do I get into His good favor? Or to put it most pointedly: How do I get saved? And (2) Do the Scriptures really have only one unified answer to this question? Or are there, in fact, all sorts of responses given along the way? Do the Scriptures really come to a mind on the matter? Or is it a bit of a mess that we try to make cleaner in our systematic presentations?

(2) Surprising Connections

In our text God references an oath that He swore to Abraham in light of Abraham's obedience back in Gen 22. The context for God's oath here is that well-known, often misunderstood, biblical story where Abraham is asked to offer up his son Isaac to God. When we isolate this text and put it under the microscope, we may, indeed, get confused and freak out a bit. But when we let the camera pan out and we see the whole of the biblical story from Genesis to Revelation, something else comes into view, and we see this story in a different, a brighter, light. We come to realize that what God is doing here with Abraham is, in fact, picturing and preparing us for what He will do with His own Son Jesus for our sake.

(3) Practical Implications

Implication #1: We Can Trust Our Bibles—One of my opening questions had to do with whether Scripture could be trusted to speak coherently, whether it really has one underlying answer to the question: How do we get saved? And I hope you can see plainly at the end of all this, the answer is a resounding: Yes! God has not stuttered. He is not stumbling around trying one thing and then the next. He is not speaking out both sides of His mouth and hoping that we don't notice. His answer has always been the same. Jesus!

The fact that somewhere around 40 different authors, from all manner of different backgrounds—different vocations, different ethnicities, different socioeconomic statuses, different religious upbringings—writing in three different languages, on three different continents, using many different literary styles, responding to many different historical circumstances, through the course of over 1400 years, could write something that, when taken on the whole, could comprise such a profound unity . . . it's astounding! It gives indication that, though these words have come us from many hearts and minds, as it were, they have ultimately come to us from one Heart and one Mind above them all: namely, God's.

Implication #2: We Can Rest in Jesus—"[O]ne day as I was passing into the field, with some dashes on my conscience, fearing yet that all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, 'Your righteousness is in heaven' (John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*).

Reflection Questions



- Have you ever come to texts in Scripture that are hard to understand or make sense of? What's an example? How might seeing that particular text in light of the whole story of Scripture help you make some headway in proper interpretation? Give it a try! Use the cross-references in the margins of your Bible to help you get started.
- In what ways did today's sermon help you grow in trust for the unity of the Bible? Have you ever considered the Bible's unity one strong proof of its divine inspiration? What other things have helped convince you that the Bible is God's word? Do you sometimes struggle with this?
- Have you ever wrestled with the idea of assurance? John Bunyan drew great strength from texts like 1 Cor 1:30. What texts have helped you?