

Genesis
St. Jerome Adult Bible Study
Lesson 5 – Answers
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1. In Lesson 4, we learned that God and Abraham were friends. The evidence of this friendship occurs in several verses including 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 14:8, and James 2:23; however, the most interesting evidence is the dialogue between God and Abraham when Abraham bargains for the life of the people of Sodom in Genesis 18:22 – 32.
2. Sarah's laughter at the birth of Isaac (21:6) was a joyful reaction to a child she never believed possible. Her laughter earlier (18:9 – 12) was an ironic or sarcastic reaction to the absurd notion that such old people as she and Abraham could conceive.
3. Abraham, at God's insistence, obeys Sarah, who suddenly dislikes Hagar, and sends Hagar and Ishmael out of the camp. Abraham loved Ishmael since he was his son but God assured him that Ishmael would be cared for, father nations, and be prosperous.
4. While Isaac was the "child of divine promise" becoming a patriarch of the Jews, King David, and Jesus, Ishmael, too received God's favor. God promised Ishmael that he would father nations.
5. In Chapter 21, Abraham once again has dealings with King Abimelech. In the previous chapter, Abraham, out of fear for his safety, tried to pass Sarah off as his sister (which got Abimelech in a spot of trouble); in this instance, Abraham makes a pact with the king to allow Abraham and his people to settle in Canaan.
6. Abraham dug a well in Canaan but the king's servants seized it. After his pact with Abimelech, Abraham got his well back. This was the first establishment of ownership in the land which God had promised to him.
7. In Chapter 22:2, God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac: ²Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you." It is clear by His words, that God knows how much Abraham loves his son.
8. The New Testament reiterates Abraham's faith in his God:
Hebrews 11:17 – 19: ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, "Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name." ¹⁹He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

James 2: 21 – 23: ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works. ²³Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God."

9. God tested Abraham by commanding the sacrifice of Isaac, “the son you love, your only one.” God knows Abraham’s heart, of course, and so there really was no reason to put him to such an extreme test EXCEPT to make of him an example of faith for all ages to come.
10. If Abraham had sacrificed Isaac, then, unless God raised him from the dead, Isaac would not become the father of nations which God had promised. Abraham probably believed that somehow God would resolve this paradox.
11. God had promised that Canaan would someday belong to Abraham’s descendants. The purchase of a grave site for Sarah represents a sort of down payment on the ownership of land. This scene would also serve as encouragement to the Jews of the diaspora.
- 12.
- 13.
14. Abraham would never allow Isaac to marry a Canaanite, fearing that an allegiance to a Canaanite tribe might preclude Canaan’s ownership by Abraham’s descendants. By the same token, he did not want Isaac to marry outside Canaan since his wife and family would have no connection to the land.
15. In seeking a wife for Isaac, the servant prays for divine guidance or a sign of God’s favor in the selection. Rebekah gives the servant the sign he asked for and her family readily agrees to the marriage. Thus, the servant knows that Rebekah is the one.
- 16.
17. Before dying, Abraham gifted significant shares of his estate to his other sons for their welfare; but, he gave Isaac everything that was left – surely a huge inheritance.
18. God provided a wife and many sons to Ishmael and thereby fulfilled his promise to Abraham:
¹²But God said to Abraham: “Do not be distressed about the boy or about your slave woman. Heed the demands of Sarah, no matter what she is asking of you; for it is through Isaac that descendants shall bear your name. ¹³As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a great nation of him also, since he too is your offspring.”
And His promise to Hagar:
¹⁸Arise, lift up the boy [Ishmael] and hold him by the hand; for I will make of him a great nation.”