

GENESIS

Why The Beginning Matters

STUDY 17
ABRAHAM AND HIS SONS
THE FINAL TEST OF FAITH
GENESIS 20-22





Jerusalem ●
(For reference only)

● Hebron
Gen 13:18, 23:2, 23:19

● Gerar
Gen 10:19, 20:1-2, 26:1, 6, 17, 20, 26

● Beer-sheba
Gen 21:14, 31-33, 22:19, 26:23, 26:33

Gen 26:2
--Egypt

┃ = 5 km.

NEGEV

Hebrew word for "the south country" in Gen 24:62

PHILISTIA

DEAD SEA

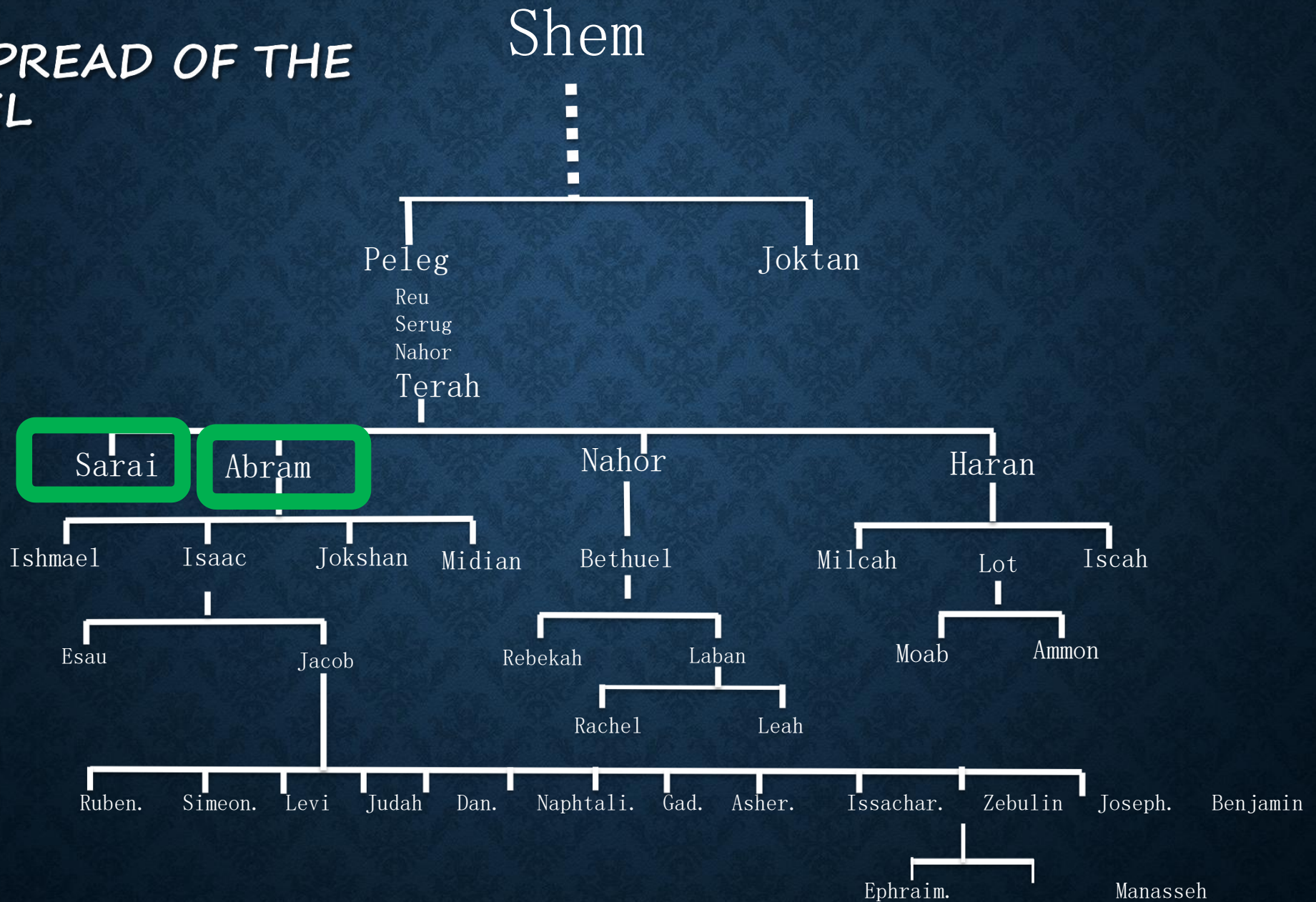
Intervention by God to Abimelech in a dream



ABRAHAM'S JUSTIFICATION

Genesis 20:11-13 Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' 12 Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. 13 And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, "He is my brother" ' "

THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL



ABRAHAM'S CULPABILITY

- Matured ..
- Learned unselfish love.. saved Lot,
- Prays for Sodom
- After all the promises about his son ..he risks it all by giving up Sarah
- Abimelech seem far more righteous



GRACE

- Imperfect man
- Driven by fear despite all of God's promises
- Not morally superior to Abimelech
- The power of grace and God's determination to achieve His purposes

LESSONS

- Don't be haughty toward others who don't believe or worship God. You are only what you are by grace.
- Don't think that you ever 'get over' sin need to maintain our guard
- Don't think you have to be better than anyone else to be used of God. God uses broken and failed people

AMAZING ACT OF FAITH

Genesis 20:17–18 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. 18 For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands resting on an open book. The hands are positioned over the pages, suggesting a moment of prayer or study. In the background, a glowing candle provides a warm, soft light. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM
PRAYING FOR BABIES IN THE LIGHT OF
WHAT HAPPENS IN GEN 21?



ABRAHAM & SARAH


CLIMAX

Genesis 21:1-3 (ESV) The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. 2 And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. 3 Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac.


Genesis 21:4–7 (ESV) And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.” 7 And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

ISAAC

God's gracious
delightful love
that brings joy
(Exaltation)



God has made laughter for me;
everyone who hears will laugh over me.”



Sarah's unbelief is
laughable
(Humiliation)

ISAAC

- Our laughable weakness
- His Delightful Love

EACH SON GOES THROUGH LIFE THREATENING ORDEAL

Ishmael



Isaac



SIMILARITIES

Ishmael

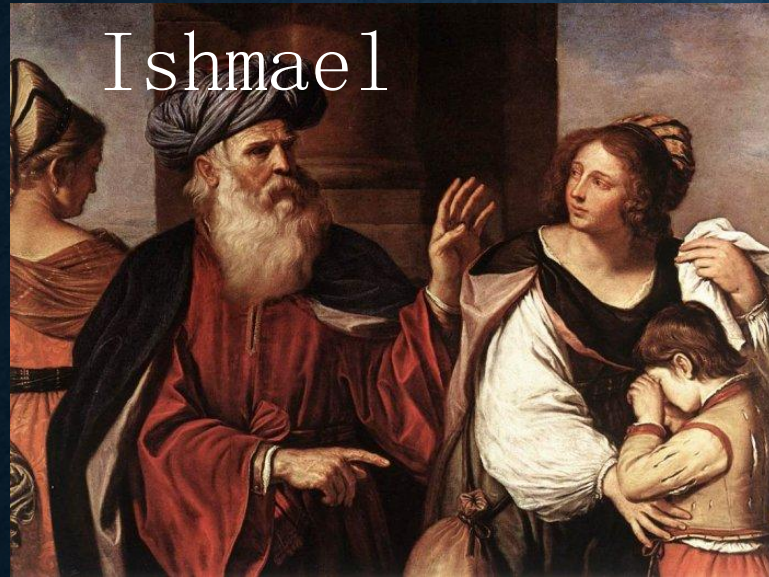


- Sent out to wilderness
- Face certain death
- Angel saves
- Promises -future nations

Isaac



DIFFERENCES

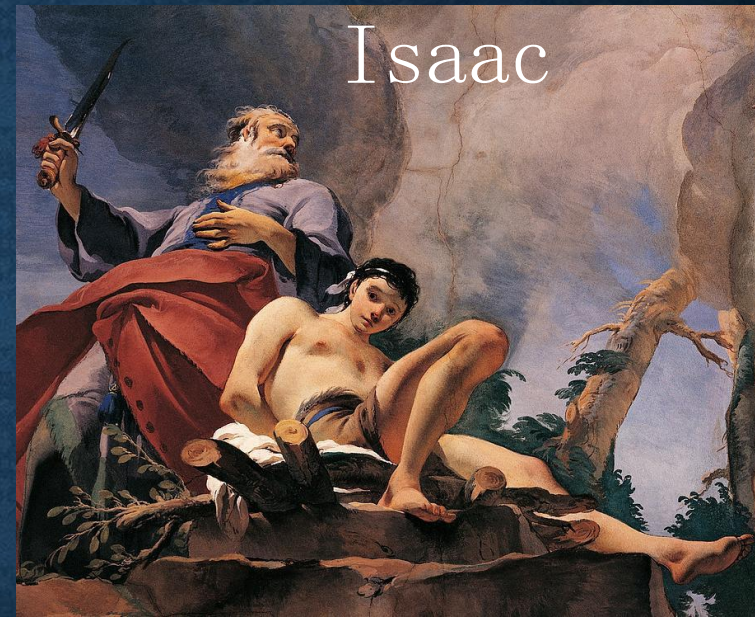


Ishmael

Sarah drives out Ishmael

Hagar passively watches Ishmael die

Ishmael's peril occurs as a result of Abraham's disobedience,



Isaac

God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac

Abraham actively participates in sacrifice of Isaac

Isaac's peril occurs as a result of Abraham's obedience

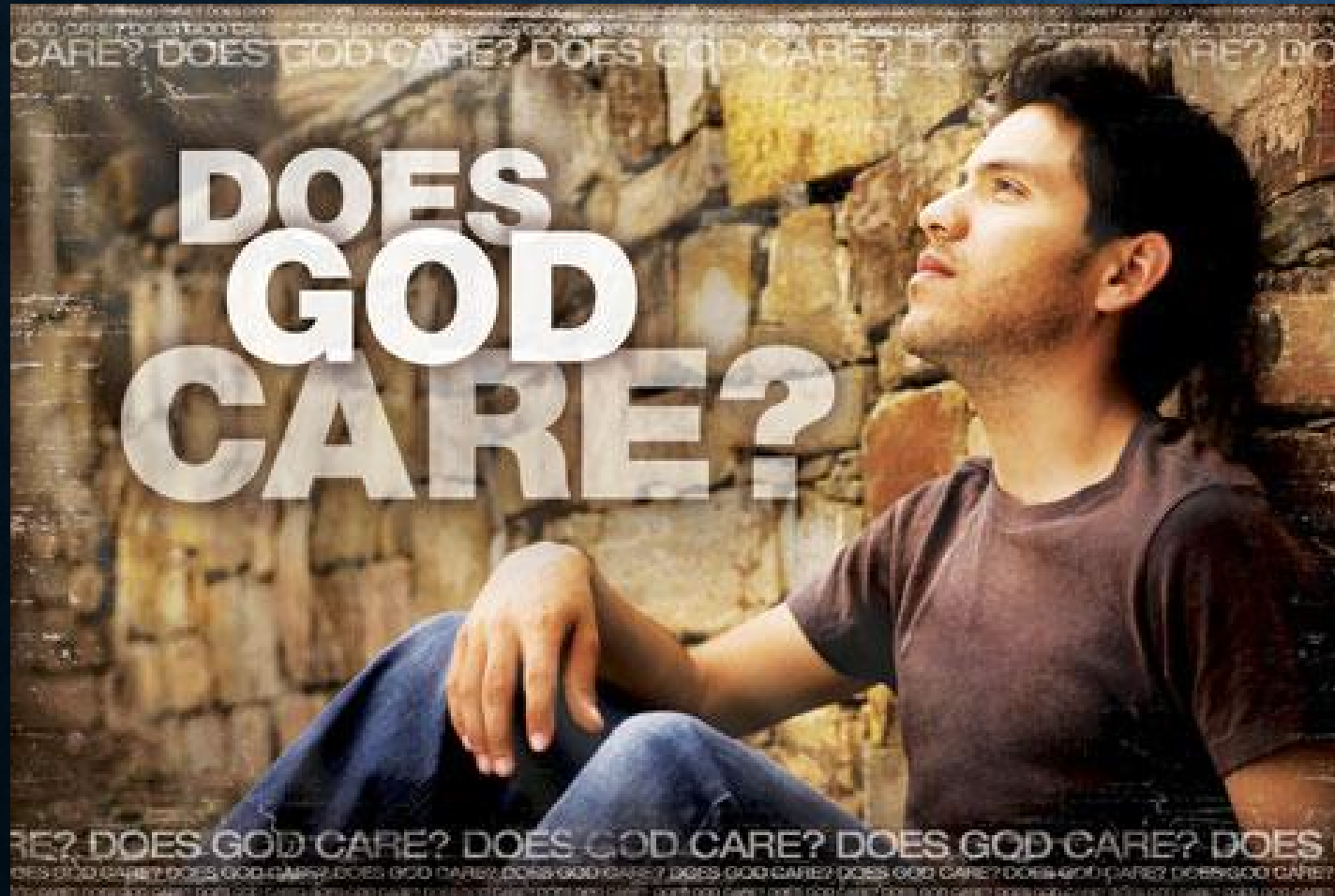
Promotes a one
dimensional view of
faith



**YOUR BEST
LIFE NOW**

WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO US

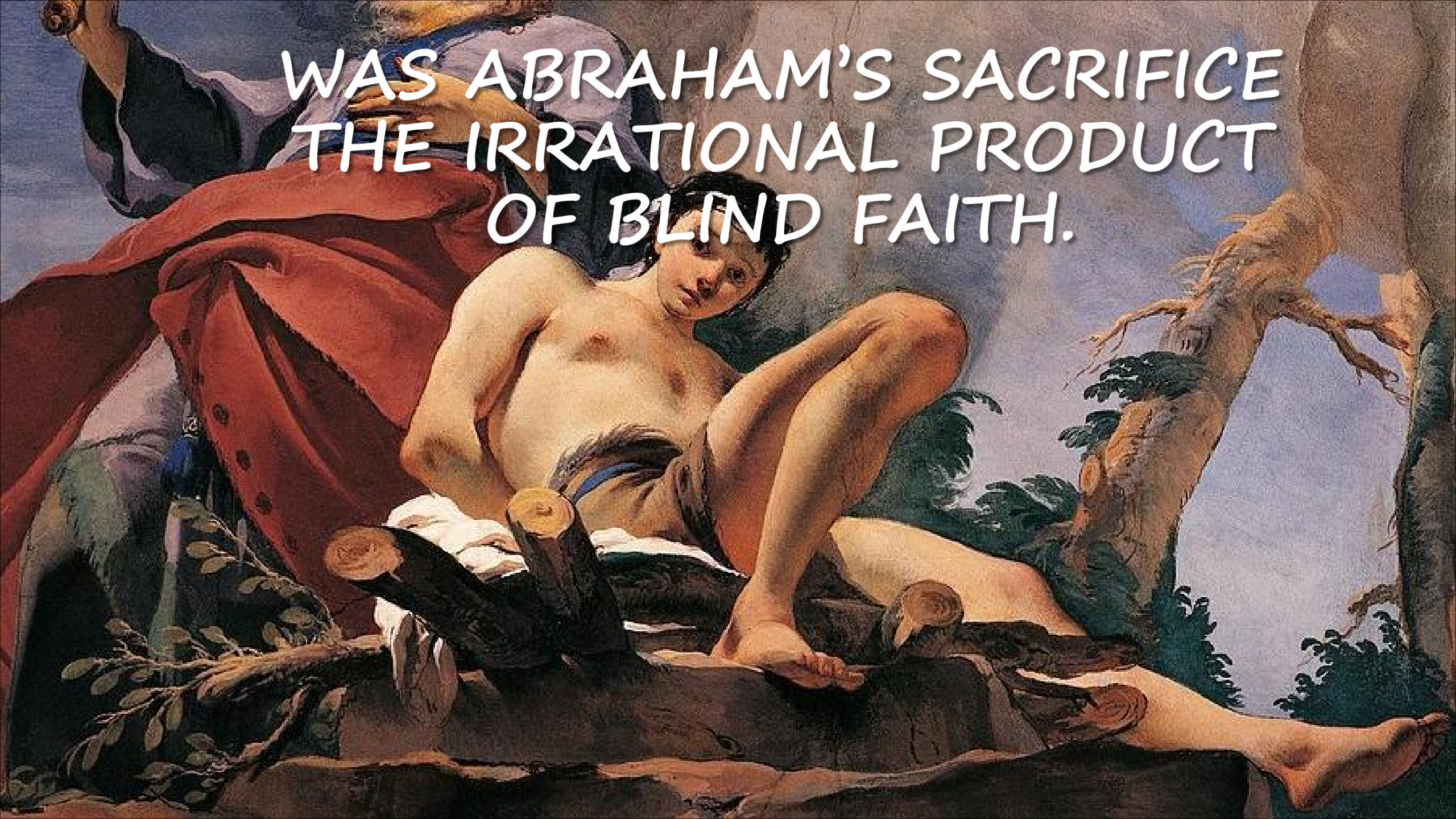
God's Love vs God's Power

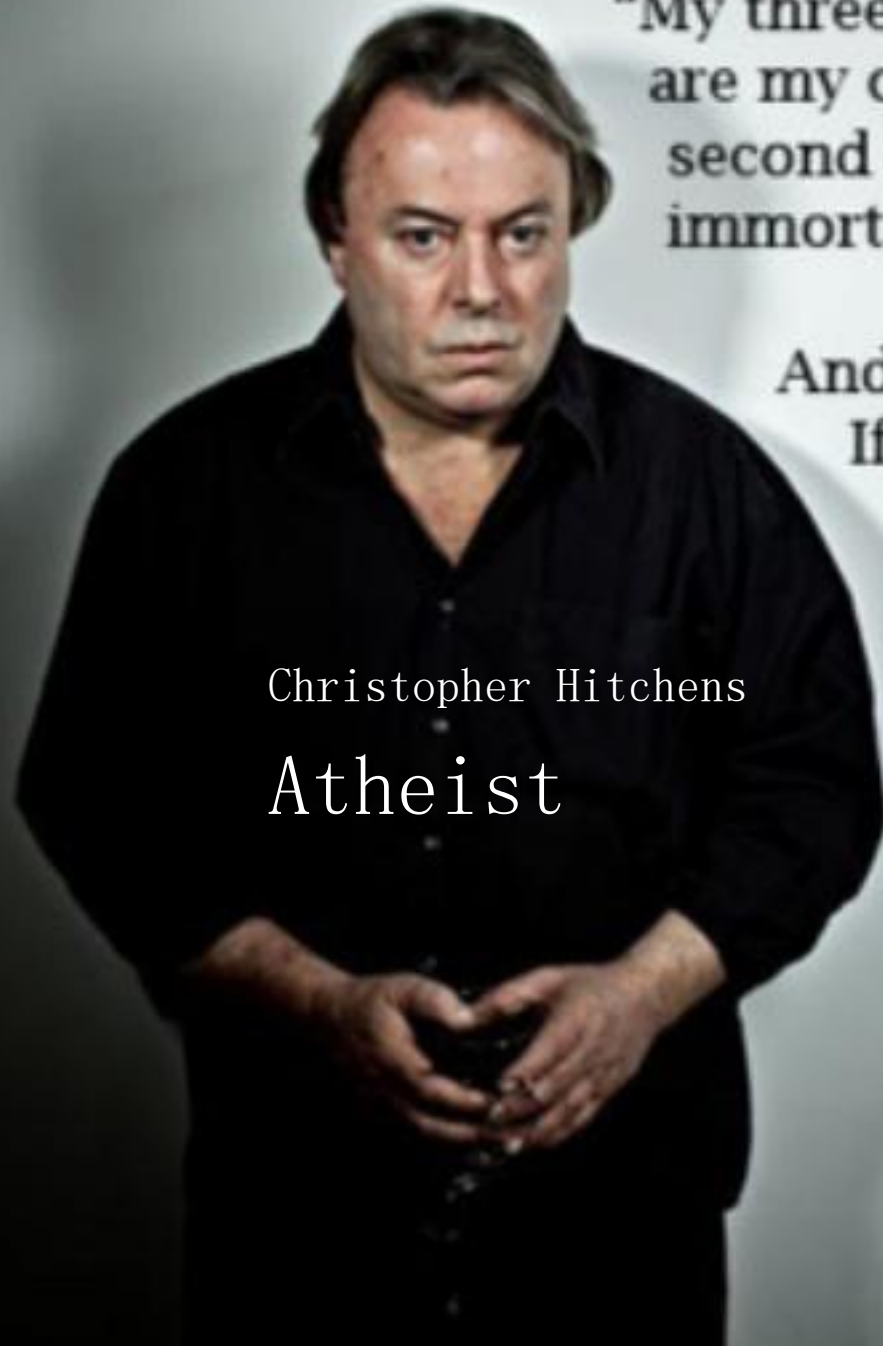


WHAT IS THE LESSON?

- Pain and suffering comes to all
- Some because of disobedience
- Others because of obedience


WAS ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE
THE IRRATIONAL PRODUCT
OF BLIND FAITH.





Christopher Hitchens
Atheist

“My three delightful children are my only chance at a second life, or even an immortal one.

And I'll tell you something:
If I was told to sacrifice them to prove my devotion to God and admire the man who said ‘Yes, I'll gut my kid to show my love of God, I'd say no,  kick you.”

Pakistan 'blasphemy' boy 'doesn't regret cutting off hand'

Raise hands if did not love the Prophet



MOAB KING SACRIFICES SON



2 Kings 3:26–27 (ESV) When the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took with him 700 swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom, but they could not. 27 Then he took his oldest son who was to reign in his place and offered him for a burnt offering on the wall. And there came great wrath against Israel. And they withdrew from him and returned to their own land.



Deuteronomy 12:31 You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

PENGUIN CLASSICS
SØREN KIERKEGAARD
FEAR AND TREMBLING



IT IS ONLY ABOUT ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE?

The idea of the leap of faith

Irrational obedience

No matter how outrageous if
you do it you are really faithful

Purely ethical level cannot make sense

Failed the test as he should have rejected it

Faith beats ethics





THE STORY IS
TAKEN OUT OF ITS
CONTEXT

1. IF IT IS PURELY
OBEDIENCE THEN
STAB ISAAC IN
THE TENT?

KNIFE SARAH

2. HISTORICAL CULTURAL CONTEXT ANCIENT SOCIETIES - COMMUNAL

Hope and dreams for family success not individuals

Hope and dreams for family
success through eldest son
Law of Primogeniture



3. FIRST BORN IS FORFEIT TO GOD

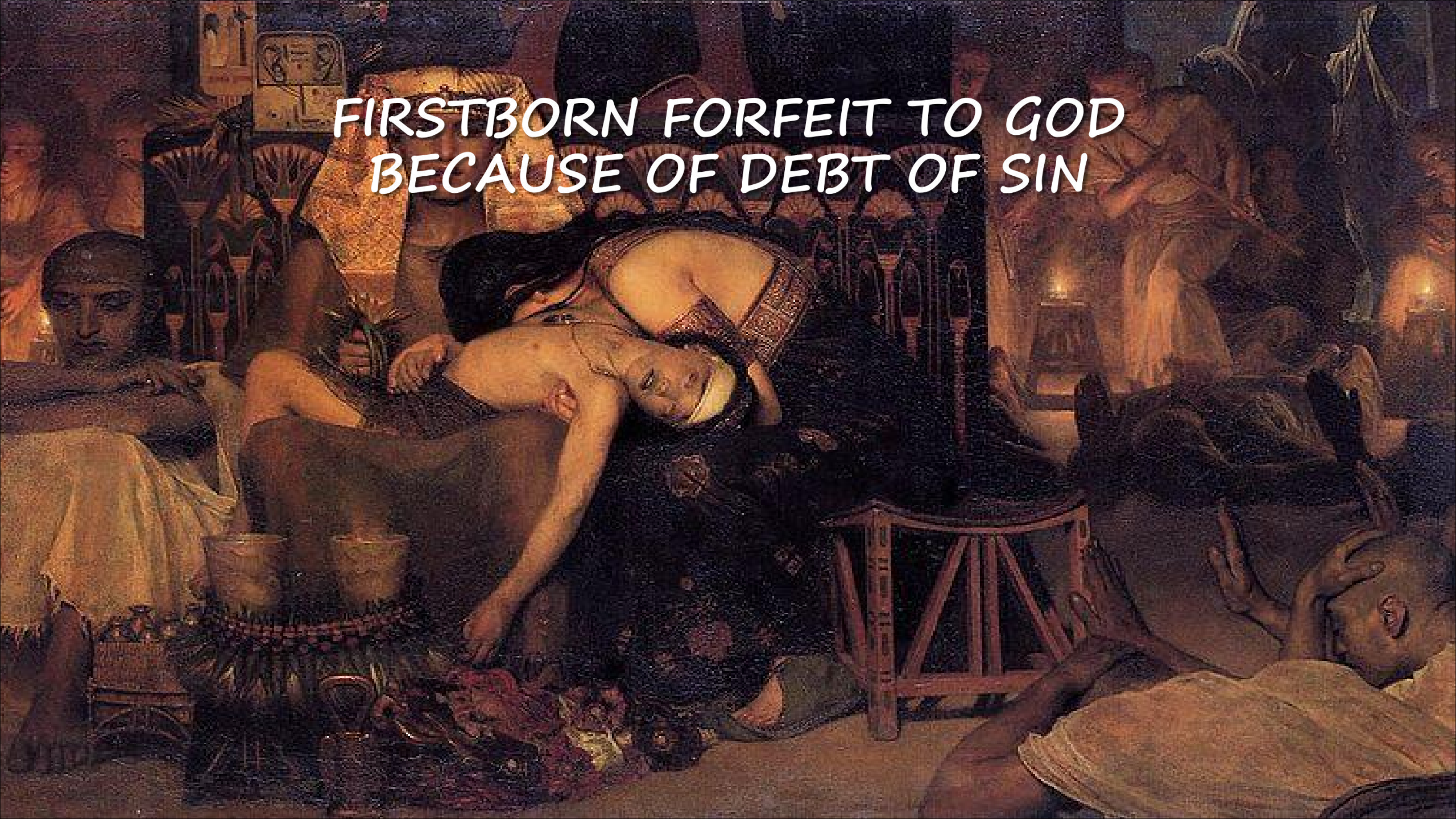
Exodus 22:29–30 …The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. 30 You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me

3. FIRST BORN IS FORFEIT TO GOD

Exodus 13:11-16 “When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, 12 you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. …

13bEvery firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

FIRSTBORN FORFEIT TO GOD
BECAUSE OF DEBT OF SIN



CONCEPT OF SUBSTITUTE..REDEMPTION



Numbers 18:15–16 (ESV)
Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. 16 And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

DEBT OF SIN EVERY FAMILY OWES TO GOD



- There is a law of justice and all human beings fail to live according to this and owe a debt of sin
- Family orientated culture the forfeiture is way God is saying everyone is sinful
- God calling in the debt



Kill Sarah !!!


4. RATIONAL BASIS OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH JOURNEY

- Miraculous calling ..vision of God Acts 7:2
- God' s covenant Gen 12:1-4
- Rescued from Egypt...blessed with treasure
- God appeared in vision Gen 13 ,15 and 18
- Defeated kings in Gen 14 with handful of men
- Intervened in Abimelech
- Isaac born when Abraham 100 years of age
- God spoke to Abraham to release Ishmael

HE GAVE UP HIS FIRST SON TO THE LORD



Genesis 21:13
And I will
make a nation
of the son of
the slave
woman also,
because he is
your
offspring.



5. ABRAHAM'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD' JUSTICE AND MERCY GENESIS 19

Genesis 18:25b Shall not the Judge of
all the earth do what is just?

ABRAHAM SEES HOW GOD OPERATES

Genesis 18:17–19 The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”

*DO YOU NOT THINK GOD WILL REMEMBER
ABRAHAM'S SON IF HE HAS REMEMBERED
ABRAHAM'S NEPHEW?*

Genesis 19:29 (ESV) So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

6. THE COVENANT PROMISES OF GOD

Hebrews 11:17–18 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named”

UTAH MURDERS 1984

Brenda Lafferty and her toddler daughter Erica



Ron Lafferty



Revelation from God to kill his sister-in-law Brenda and her 15-month-old daughter Erica because of her resistance to his fundamentalist belief in polygamy

THE ABRAHAM'S BASIS OF A RATIONAL FAITH

- Culture of family
- Primogeniture
- First born belongs to God because of sin
- Abraham's faith journey
- Witnessed God's justice and mercy
- God's covenantal promises to Abraham

THE TENSION

Command of God



Promise of God

Offer up Isaac

Through Isaac..nation

The God who can rightly call in his debt
The justice and holiness of God

The God who gave the promises
The grace and love of God

A photograph of a sheep in a slaughterhouse pen. The sheep is the central focus, looking towards the camera. It has a thick, light-colored woolly coat. In the background, other sheep are visible, some partially obscured by a rusty metal fence. The ground is concrete and appears wet. The text "FEELS LIKE KILLING THE ONE YOU WANT TO SAVE" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the lower half of the image.

FEELS LIKE KILLING THE
ONE YOU WANT TO SAVE

THE STRUGGLE

- God appears to want to remove the very salvation begun by Himself
- How can a holy God be gracious and how can a gracious God be holy
- If God is not just what hope do we have about evil but if God is just what hope is there for us?

DUTY

Holy and
Just God
Abraham owed
debt of sin

Willing to g
o



LOVE

Merciful ,
gracious
and loving

Able to go

BELIEF IN THE SAFETY OF HIS SON

Genesis 22:5-8 (ESV) Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.

BELIEF IN THE PROVISION OF GOD

Genesis 22:7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” 8 Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

WHAT ARE THE TWO WAYS IN WHICH HE CAN THINK ABOUT HIS TASK?



I can do this , I can do this

He can do this , He will provide
I don' t know how God can b
e holy and gracious at the
same time

NT CLUES

Hebrews 11:17–19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back

KNOW-EXPERIENCED

Genesis 22:10-12 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 12 He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me

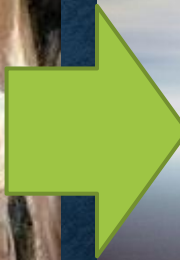
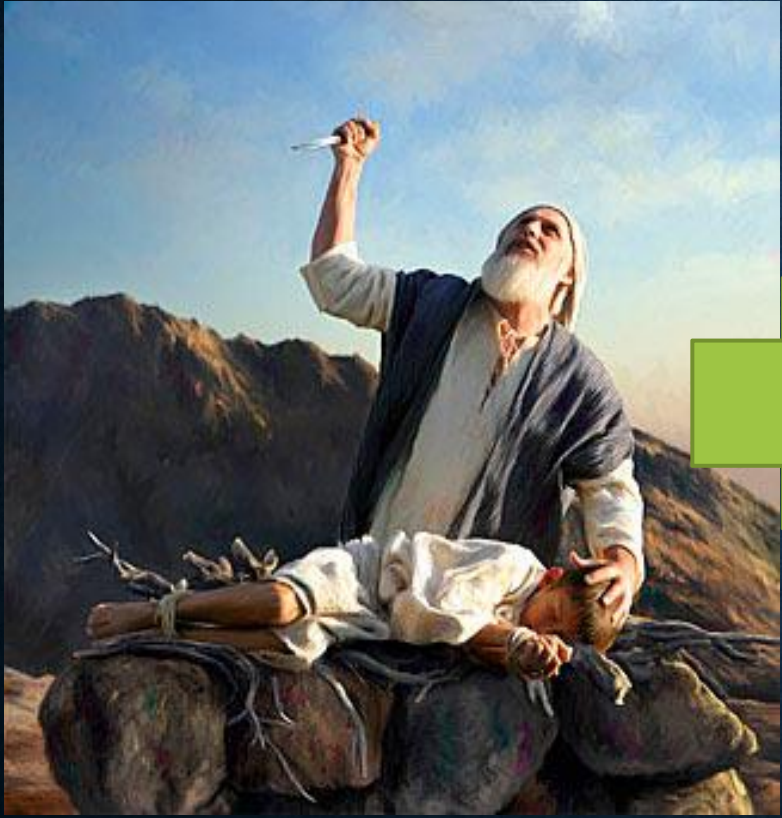
Genesis 22:13-14 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide” ; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

NOW WE KNOW HE LOVES US

*If Abraham were at the foot of the cross it is God
who climbed this mountain and God who gave his
only son
He will understand as we do*



ANTICIPATES GOD'S SACRIFICE



COVENANT REINFORCED

Genesis 22:15–18 And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice

COVENANT FORMULA

Election

Genesis 12



Live
Righteously



Genesis 13-22



Covenantal
promises

Still to come

OUR COVENANT FORMULA



EVERY OTHER RELIGION



FAITH AND WORKS

James 2: 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” —and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone

Romans 3:28 .. For we hold that one is justified by
faith apart from works of the law

DEFINITION OF WORK

PAUL



Work is that which one does to earn salvation

JAMES



Work is that which is evidence of faith

Both are right

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time

OUR COVENANT FORMULA

Election

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

Live
Righteously

who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time

Covenantal
promises

4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, .. a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time