

47. Abraham has spent 45 years of taking in doctrine. He was sterile. Sarah was barren. Yet new fertile gametes were created and instead of being Semitic, they were of a new race called Jew.
48. We get details about this miracle from the Pass in Review<sup>2</sup> of faith-rest heroes recited by the writer of Hebrews in:

**Hebrews 11:17** By means of doctrine [ **resident in his soul** ], Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up** [ **as a sacrifice** ] Isaac. Even he who had received the promises was offering up his only son.

**v. 18** Toward **whom** [ **Abraham** ] it had been communicated [ **in Genesis 21:12** ], "That in Isaac shall your **seed** [ **σπέρμα (spérma): sperm/gamete** ] be designated."

**v. 19** Having **calculated** [ **accounting term** ] that **God was able** [ **had the inherent power** ] to raise **him** [ **Isaac** ] up, even **out from the dead** [ **resuscitation** ], for which reason also, **He recovered him** [ **back from the sacrificial altar** ] by means of **a type** [ **comparison with Jesus Christ Who would be similarly sacrificed** ]. (EXT)

49. This passage gives a retrospective analysis about what happened on Mount Moriah among Abraham, Isaac, and God and provides details related to James's comments in James 2:21.
50. The grammar in verse 21 can be further amplified. It uses the phrase, "offered up" which is the aorist active participle of **ἀναφέρω (anaphérō)**. The prefix, **ἀνά (aná)**, means, "to lift upward" and with the noun, **φέρω (phérō)**: "to carry." Together it means to "lift up the body and carry it" to the altar.

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<sup>2</sup> "If you've ever heard a West Point Band member (or anyone else affiliated with West Point) mention a 'parade' on the plain or a 'review,' these terms are synonymous with the 'pass in review.' The pass in review is a long-standing military tradition dating back to when Baron [Frederick] Von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge and reported to Washington during the American Revolution in 1778. Von Steuben's training technique was to create a 'model company' and one of the ways he did this was through drill and ceremony, which is still being used to this day. It is of interesting note that when he arrived, he spoke very little English (he is of German decent) and he would often order his translator to swear at his men for him in English. Upon his arrival to Valley Forge, the men were anything but a model company; that is to say until Von Steuben was through with them. He developed what is known as *Regulations for the Orders and Discipline of the Troops of the United States of America*, also known as the 'Blue Book.' The West Point Band and Hellcats are an integral and essential part of this long-standing military tradition." Dave Loy Song, "Life in the West Point Band: The Pass in Review," <https://westpointband.wordpress.com/2014/05/27/the-pass-in-review/>, accessed July 5, 2018.

51. Significantly, the action of this participle precedes the action of the main verb which is the aorist active indicative of **δικαιόω** (*dikaiōō*): “justified.”
52. The action by Abraham of lifting up and carrying Isaac to the altar preceded the action of justification. When Abraham unsheathed the knife, God intervened and stayed his hand resulting in justification.
53. The aorist tense of *dikaiōō* is culminative indicating a sequence of events denoting the attainment of the end of such effort or process. Abraham had built up doctrine in his soul over the course of 45 years since he departed from Haran up to the drama on Mount Moriah.
54. Over that time, his soul accumulated a high inventory of doctrine to which his faith could rely upon as working objects.
55. Those working objects supported a sequence of works that ultimately preceded the action of the main verb of being justified: faith + doctrine + application = works that resulted in the divine imputation of justification.
56. In the middle of all this is Isaac, his “adult son,” indicated by the masculine noun **υἱός** (*huiós*), who faithfully followed his father’s leadership and submitted to being laid upon the wooden altar.
57. The word “altar” is the noun **θυσιαστήριον** (*thusiastérion*). Its background is associated with the altars of the Tabernacle and Temple for the sacrifice of specific animals related to the Levitical Code.
58. Its use in James is unique since it refers specifically to the altar on which Abraham intended to sacrifice Isaac until the Lord intervened in Genesis 22.
59. The Hebrew word for “altar” is the masculine noun, **מִזְבֵּחַ** (*mizeach*): “to slaughter an animal, usually for sacrifice. The sacrificial system was at the focal point of the Israelite systems of worship. God commanded that the altar for burnt offerings be made of earth or undressed stones.”<sup>3</sup>
60. The altar, *mizeach*, was instituted for the Tabernacle’s sacrifices of burnt offerings in the outer court:

**Exodus 20:24** ‘You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.’  
(NASB)

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<sup>3</sup> Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 589.

An altar erected for burnt-offerings must be of earth. This commandment necessitated that the name of Jehovah must first be known and trusted, before sacrifice could be presented to Him. The altar was not to be the object. But the name of Jehovah was that which the Israelite had to remember. And earth ready on the spot was to be used for building up a sacrificial place. (p. 307)

The altar of earth was a lowly thing, and stood out in contrast with the high places, selected by the heathen nations of Canaan, for their places of worship. Calvary was a place of no esteem. The Cross had no attractiveness for the eye, and He who hung on it had “no beauty that we should desire Him” [Isaiah 53:2c].<sup>4</sup> (p. 308)

61. This excerpt and James’s reference in James 2:21 require that we now observe the original event that is documented in Genesis 22.

**Genesis 22:1** Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” (NASB)

1. The importance of spiritual growth is imperative for God to issue blessings to believers. Failure to make the advance only delays the process. Abraham was no exception.
2. Abraham’s faith had to be tested before he was spiritually able to face the ultimate test that occurred in chapter 22. In the process, Abraham was challenged by the Lord to do certain things. Some he did and some he did not, so it was a learning curve.
3. First of all, Abram was born in Chaldea where its citizens were deep into the cosmic systems’ involvement in idolatry. The first order of business was to get him away from that area.
4. In Genesis 11:29–31, we learn that Terah moved his family out of Ur. It included his grandson Lot and his son Abram, whose wife was Sarai.<sup>5</sup> Their destination was Canaan, but Terah only went as far as Haran and settled there. Here’s some background information on the city of Haran:

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<sup>4</sup> Henry W. Soltau, *The Tabernacle: The Priesthood and the Offerings*, illus. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1972), 307, 308.

<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, Scripture points out as early as Genesis 11:29 that, “Sarai was barren; she had no child.” Sarai realizes this in Genesis 16:2, “The Lord has prevented me from having children.” Later, in Genesis 17:16, the Lord provided “Sarah” with Jewish gametes as He tells Abraham, “I will give you a son by her.”



Haran. The city was on the busy caravan road connecting with Nineveh, Asshur, and Babylon in Mesopotamia, and with Damascus, Tyre, and Egyptian cities in the West and South. It was a natural stopping place for Terah and Abraham on their trek to Palestine.

Interestingly, Haran, like Ur, was a center of the moon god cult. Whether Terah was a worshiper of the moon god Sin and refused to break with his idolatry is an open question. At any rate, when Terah died at Haran, Abraham and his nephew Lot and their families continued their migration southwest into Canaan, passing through the hill country of Shechem and on to Bethel. (pp. 535–36)

The Mari Tablets, unearthed in excavations at Mari ... belong to the eighteenth century B.C. Haran was also a flourishing city in the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries B.C., as is known from frequent references to it in cuneiform sources. Cuneiform tablets from Nuzu [in Assyria] greatly illuminate the patriarchal age.<sup>6</sup> (p. 536)

5. Terah died in Haran at the age of 205 (Genesis 11:32). The Lord then told Abraham to leave Haran and the area of Mesopotamia and go “to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation.” That proclamation in Genesis 12:2, “I will make you a great nation,” is the first mention of the Abrahamic Covenant.
6. This Covenant was repeated with the promise of a land grant in Genesis 13:14–18. Next, in Genesis 15, the boundaries of the land are given, including everything west of the Euphrates from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea southward to the “River of Egypt” (Genesis 15:18–21).
7. The next proclamation of the Covenant is in Genesis 17:4–8. In verse 5, the name Abram, “exalted father,” is changed to Abraham, “father of a multitude” of nations. The Covenant is declared to be everlasting in verse 8.
8. Following the events on Mount Moriah, the Lord again confirmed the “everlasting” paragraph of the Covenant in Genesis 22:15–18.
9. During these events, Abram had a number of failures. When a famine occurred in the Negev, he made a fateful decision to go to Egypt (Genesis 12:10–16). They were intercepted on arrival and Pharaoh’s officials took them to the king’s palace.

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<sup>6</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., ed. R. K. Harrison (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 535–36.

