

## THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

*Genesis 22:1-14*

Review the last lesson. Remind the children that the Lord had promised Abraham that his descendants should inherit the land. This makes a good background for the story of how Abraham and Sarah longed for a son and were given Isaac in their old age. It will show how much depended upon Isaac, and how dear he was to Abraham.

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### Doctrinal Points

*The Lord never tempts us. Temptation comes from our selfish desires. The Lord merely permits temptation to come when we make it necessary.*

*The Word is written in the language of appearances in order to reach the evil as well as the good.*

*Our first faith in the Lord is often mixed up with a lot of false ideas.*

*The Lord will always give us the power to do right if we persist in obeying His commands as we are given to see them from the Word.*

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### Notes for Parents

The Lord performed a miracle for Abraham and Sarah, enabling Sarah to bear a son when she was ninety years old and Abraham a hundred. By command of the Lord the boy was named *Isaac*, which means “laughter.” (Read Genesis 17:15-19; 21:3, 6.) Naturally Isaac was deeply loved by his parents. But when he was still a young boy, a strange idea came into Abraham’s mind. He believed it came from God, and so the Bible says, “God did tempt Abraham.” We all tend to think that our troubles are “sent” by the Lord. Really they are always the result of evils either in us or in other people, and the Lord saves us from all but those He sees

may help us to learn lessons we need.

The people from whom Abraham came and the people living about him in Canaan believed the Lord to be a “jealous” God who needed to be pacified by sacrifices of animals, and sometimes by the sacrifice of their own children. Abraham naturally had many such false ideas in his own mind. So his desire to prove his complete devotion to the Lord took the form of the thought that he ought to sacrifice his dearest possession, which was Isaac. The story of his journey and of how the Lord stopped him at the last moment is our lesson for today. Read again verse 12 of chapter 22 to see why the Lord permitted Abraham to go almost to the point of the actual killing of his son.

We are told in the writings of Swedenborg that the people of the corrupted Ancient Church had the idea of sacrifice so ingrained in their minds that the best the Lord could do for them and for the church which followed was to teach them to sacrifice animals instead of human beings. That is one reason why the letter of the Old Testament is so full of laws regarding the birds and animals to be offered. But we should know that all these animals and birds and all the details of the laws for their offering represent spiritual things, and that even the word *sacrifice* does not mean to kill or even to “give up,” but rather to “make holy.” When we live our lives from day to day in love to the Lord and the neighbor, we are making the sacrifices commanded in the Word.

It is interesting to know that Mount Moriah, where Abraham went for his sacrifice, was the hill which long afterward became part of the city of Jerusalem and which was the site on which Solomon built the Temple.

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### Primary

*Isaac* is the name to be remembered by the little children, and they can understand that his father Abraham loved him very much. Tell the story very simply, dwelling on Abraham’s desire to serve the Lord even if it meant giving up the dearest thing he had, and dwelling on the Lord’s goodness in saving him from making a mistake, and in giving Isaac back to him. Point out that

we are often mistaken, even when we mean to do right, and that the Lord always sees our good intention and tries to help us not to make mistakes, because mistakes can do a great deal of harm. Review the meaning of an altar. In addition to the name Isaac, they should be impressed with the name Hebron as Abraham's home, and with Mount Moriah as the place of his sacrifice.

After Abram and Lot separated, Abram and his wife Sarai went to live in the southern part of the Holy Land, making their home at a place called Hebron. Abram obeyed the Lord in everything, so that the Lord even changed his name and that of Sarai by putting into each a letter from His own name to show how close they were to Him. This was the letter *h*. So their names became Abraham and Sarah, and this is the way they are remembered. And finally the Lord gave them the one thing they wanted and did not have—a son. They were both very old when this son was born; so he was all the more dear to them. His name was Isaac. *Isaac* means “laughter.”

But while Isaac was still a young boy, a strange idea came to Abraham. He was so grateful to the Lord that he felt he ought to prove it, and so he decided that the only way really to prove it was to give up to the Lord his very dearest possession.

What was his dearest possession?

In those days people thought that in order to give anything to the Lord they had to kill it and burn it upon an altar.

This was called making a “sacrifice.”

Where did Abraham go to sacrifice Isaac?

Try to remember the name of this place, because you will hear of it again.

Abraham did not tell Isaac what he was planning to do.

What did Isaac ask him on the way up the mountain?

What did Abraham answer?

When he was about to sacrifice Isaac, who stopped him?

What did the Lord say?

What did Abraham find at hand to sacrifice instead of Isaac?

Abraham was very happy that he was allowed to keep Isaac, and Isaac grew up to be a very great man like his father. We all make mistakes sometimes, but if we are trying to do right, the Lord can help us and keep us from doing real harm. We must remember, however, that He cannot help us unless we are always

trying to learn more and more about what is really right from the Word.

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### Junior

Follow the Junior notes, stressing the geography. Have the class locate Bethel, Hebron, and Mount Moriah. Stress the true meaning of the word *sacrifice*, and explain how it was that Abraham could think that the Lord wanted him to kill Isaac. Make clear to them that what the Lord does want us to give up are those things which stand in the way of our doing right, and that we love the Lord as Abraham did when we put doing right above having our own way.

Where did Abraham come from?

Why did he leave there?

Where did he go?

Who went with him?

Where did his brother Nahor stop?

Who was Abraham's wife?

After his separation from Lot at Bethel, Abram went farther south and settled in Hebron. There he was regarded as a great man. The Lord blessed him and changed his name to *Abraham*. In the Hebrew language every letter is important. The letter represented by our *h* is one of the letters in the name *Jehovah*. Adding it to Abram's name meant that he was especially devoted to the Lord. The name of Abram's wife, Sarai, was also changed by adding an *h*: she became *Sarah*.

Abraham lacked one thing: a son to inherit all his possessions. Sarah, because she loved Abraham, offered him her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, for another wife. In the depraved state of religion at that time, men thought it was permissible to have more than one wife. So by Hagar, Abraham had a son whom he named *Ishmael*. But the Lord told Abraham that it was not right that Ishmael should be his heir, and finally gave him a son by his true wife, Sarah. This son was named *Isaac*. His birth was a miracle, for Abraham was a hundred years old, and Sarah ninety, when Isaac was born. We can imagine how dearly Abraham loved Isaac.

Then a great temptation came to Abraham. The Scripture says, "God did tempt Abraham." This is a good place to learn some-

thing about the Bible which we shall often need to remember. The Lord wrote the Bible by means of men, and used in its letter the things that were in their minds. Sometimes their minds could understand what He meant, and then the truth could be expressed clearly. But often their minds contained false ideas which partially hid the truth, just as a cloud hides the sun and yet lets some of its light shine through. Clouds in the Scriptures represent the letter of the Word. You can see how this is. You know that your parents love you dearly all the time. But when you are bent on doing wrong, and their love has to take the form of checking and even of punishing you, you feel that they do not love you. Abraham had been brought up among idol-worshippers who believed that the gods envied them their dearest possessions and could be made happy by the sacrifice of animals and even of children. Abraham loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him wholly. Thus he was prompted to sacrifice the dearest thing he had, which was Isaac. He thought the prompting came from the Lord. His desire did come from the Lord, but the form it took came from his own mind.

Where did they go for the sacrifice?

This is thought to be the very Mount Moriah in Jerusalem where the Temple was built long afterward.

Who went with them?

What beast of burden did they take?

How long did the journey take?

What happened at the foot of the mountain?

What did they take with them up the mountain?

What did Isaac ask his father?

What did Abraham reply?

The Lord was pleased with Abraham's devotion and with his willingness to sacrifice his dearest possession. He let Abraham prove his sincerity by taking the long, three-day journey, climbing the mountain, and even making all the final preparations and raising the knife. Then He showed Abraham that Isaac was to be spared.

What did He provide for the sacrifice?

Abraham had to be allowed to give expression in his own way to his good desire.

Read Micah 6:6-8 and Psalm 51:16-17, and see what the Lord really wants us to do for Him in the way of sacrifice. The word “sacrifice” comes from two Latin words and means “to make sacred.” The Lord has made the world and everything in it for our use and enjoyment, but He does want us to sacrifice—that is, to “make sacred”—all that He gives us by using our talents and our possessions in service to Him and to our neighbor. The people of Old Testament days were allowed to sacrifice animals and birds and meal and oil because these things represented good affections and thoughts.

Isaac grew up and became the second great “patriarch” or father of the Hebrews. Abraham knew that Isaac should not be allowed to marry one of the women of the land in which they now lived. So he sent his chief servant to Haran to get a wife for Isaac from among his own people.

Where was Haran?

Who had settled there?

We shall study next the beautiful story of the servant’s journey to Haran and of how he was led by the Lord to choose the right woman. He brought back with him Rebekah, the granddaughter of Abraham’s brother Nahor, as a wife for Isaac. Ishmael married an Egyptian woman and settled in the wilderness of Paran, and became the father of the Ishmaelites, about whom we read in the Bible and who are probably the ancestors of the Arabs of our time. But Isaac inherited the Holy Land.

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### Intermediate

The meaning of Isaac, and the meaning of Abraham’s temptation and the reason for it, should be stressed. The outline of the correspondence of his journey and its conclusion can be given. The thought to leave in the minds of the pupils is that of the true meaning of sacrifice.

The Lord had promised that all the land of Canaan should belong to the descendants of Abraham. Yet Abraham and Sarah were very old and still had no son. Chapter 16 of Genesis tells how Sarah was troubled by this and offered Abraham her handmaid, Hagar, in the hope that Hagar might bear him a son. Abraham had grown up among the corrupt descendants of the Ancient Church and had many false ideas in his mind. One of these was that it was allowable for a man to have more than one wife. This is even today the belief in many of the nations whose religion has come down from that time. Hagar did bear Abraham a son, who was named Ishmael, but the Lord told him that Ishmael should not be his heir; and in their old age Sarah bore Isaac.

Abraham was the beginning of a new church—a church on the natural plane of life. The story of Abraham in general pictures our very early childhood when we look to our parents for everything and know only that it is wrong to disobey them. With Ishmael and Isaac a new period in our lives begins: the period in which we begin to think for ourselves and to reason about right and wrong. At first our reasoning is based only on what Swedenborg calls “appearances”—how things look. If a thing seems pleasant, we judge that it is right. But later we develop a higher kind of reasoning based on what the Lord tells us in the Word. These two are called the “natural” reason and the “spiritual” reason. Ishmael represents the first and Isaac the second. Ishmael mocked Isaac and had to be sent away to live in the wilderness, while Isaac inherited the Holy Land. We have to keep Ishmael in his place and to recognize that it is Isaac through whom the good life must be developed.

Now we come to our lesson for today. When Isaac was still a young boy, it is said that “God did tempt Abraham.” We need to know that the Bible is written for the most part in terms of “appearances” of truth—that is, truth as it seems to our limited human minds. Abraham, like many people, believed that God was directly responsible for everything that came to him, both good and evil. You hear people say, “Why did God send this trial to

me?” But God does not tempt us. The bad things that come to us, and all our temptations, come from evil either in ourselves or in others. Actually the Lord withholds us from many temptations—from every temptation which He sees we are not strong enough to resist. But we grow by doing hard things; so He lets us feel the consequences of our bad feelings and wrong thoughts as far as we are really able to learn from them. This is temptation. You know that if your mother and father did everything for you and never let you do anything for yourself, you would not grow up to be a very strong person in character.

What really happened with Abraham was this: He wanted to serve the Lord wholly; he had in his mind the idea, which came from the religion in which he had been brought up, that sacrifices of animals and even of human beings were pleasing to God; so the desire to show his devotion to the Lord took the form of the thought that he ought to sacrifice his dearest possession, which was Isaac. The Lord permitted this thought to come to his mind and permitted him to go a long way toward carrying it out, because it was useful for Abraham to prove the sincerity of his devotion to the Lord. Their journey took three days, which is a picture of completeness of any state, and the place to which they went was Mount Moriah, which was later to be the site of Solomon’s temple within the city of Jerusalem. That is, Abraham’s desire to serve the Lord wholly took him finally to a state which was to become the highest state his people would reach. First he “rose up early in the morning” (the morning picturing the beginning of a new state); then he “saddled his ass” (got control of his natural ideas—the meaning of the ass—which otherwise would perhaps have borne him in another direction); then he took the wood (the feeling that he was doing right), and two of his young men (thoughts that he had about the way to do right), and Isaac (his higher reasoning faculty, which was still very young). But when he reached Mount Moriah, he left the ass and the young men behind him, and in addition to Isaac and the wood, he took fire and a knife, which picture love and truth, up to the top with him, and there he built



his altar. When we want to do something good, we often start with very imperfect ideas of how to do it; but if we persevere, gradually our feelings and thoughts become purer, and when we get really to the point of doing the thing, the Lord sometimes shows us suddenly a much better thing to do. Perhaps you have not had such an experience yet, but you will have; and when you do, you will remember how the Lord stopped Abraham just as he had raised the knife to slay his son, and showed him instead the ram which had been caught in the thicket by its horns. To slay Isaac would have been a wrong thing: it would picture destroying our higher rational faculty; that is, ceasing to think and reason about our religion. But the ram pictures a kind of love of truth which is innocent—a reasoning which does not destroy our God-given minds but lifts them up into true service of the Lord. This ram had been caught in a thicket, and Swedenborg tells us that a thicket pictures natural ideas.

Here is an example which will help you to understand what this story means. We have recently read the first eleven chapters of the Bible. Natural ideas about the Bible lead us to question the truth of the stories in those chapters; and if that is all we have, we must either give up our belief in the Bible or refuse to think and reason about it. Our love of truth is “tangled in the thicket,” and we are about to “sacrifice Isaac” in order to prove our devotion to the Lord. But with the help of the new knowledge the Lord has given us of the true meaning of the Bible, we can untangle the ram and lift it up on the altar as an offering to the Lord. The word *sacrifice* means “to make sacred.” All our faculties are given us to use, but to use in the service of the Lord and under his guidance.

*Basic Correspondences*

- the ass = the natural reason
- the ram = truth which is strong  
because it is innocent
- wood = the desire to have our  
outward conduct good
- a knife = truth

fire = love

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### Senior

The meaning of Isaac is important for young people as well as the difference between Ishmael and Isaac. Point out to them that fundamentalist sects actually make the sacrifice of Isaac—they give up rational thinking—in order to keep their loyalty to the Lord, and that their devotion is to be praised even while we reject their doctrines.

In the Scriptures, the birth of a son pictures a new development of truth or a new intellectual faculty. Abraham, we have seen, represents the simple state of obedience of our very early childhood. Abraham's first son, Ishmael, was the son of Hagar the Egyptian servant, and represents our first reasoning power which judges according to appearances and does not take spiritual things into consideration. When we are developing this kind of reason, we are very sure that we are right, and we are impatient with those who differ with us. We like to argue with everybody, and we are scornful of the ideas and advice of older people. We may even make ourselves so disagreeable that people avoid us. This lower reasoning power is a necessary and useful faculty, but it cannot live in the Holy Land: it must be separated from the higher, spiritual reason pictured by Isaac.

Isaac was born when Ishmael was fourteen years old, and he was the son of Sarah, born when Sarah was ninety and Abraham was a hundred. Sarah was Abraham's true wife, and represents the affection for spiritual truth. Ishmael was sent away to live in the wilderness of Paran and married a wife from Egypt, land of memory-knowledges. But Isaac grew up to inherit the Holy Land and to become the second of the Hebrew patriarchs.

The story of Abraham's attempt to sacrifice Isaac has troubled many because in the letter we are told that God tempted Abraham, and that He told him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering.

Does God tempt us? We should realize that much of the letter of the Word is written according to what Swedenborg calls "appearances" of truth. The Lord, in writing the Word, used the minds

of men just as they were. Sometimes they could understand His meaning and express it clearly. But often falsities in their minds or evil desires in their hearts clouded the truth or turned it into its opposite. When we are in good states, we can see and understand that the Lord loves us, but when we are bent on going our own way, or when our minds cling to some false idea, even our good impulses, which we know come from the Lord, are turned in our minds to wrong forms of expression. So the letter of the Word took its form according to the states of mind and heart of those through whom the Lord gave it, and sometimes it appears to say opposite things.

Abraham, we remember, was brought up among idolaters who were in the habit of sacrificing animals—and sometimes even their children—in the effort to please and propitiate their gods. So when Abraham was moved to show his complete devotion to the Lord, it seemed to him that he was called upon to sacrifice his dearest possession, his son and heir. This same mistaken idea of sacrifice is not uncommon even among Christians. It appears in the idea that we ought to give up anything we really enjoy, or that anything we like very much is bound to be wrong. The Lord made the world and everything in it for our use and enjoyment, and does not want us to give up anything that is good for us. But He does want us to “sacrifice,” that is, to “make sacred,” all He gives us by using all things rightly in service to Him and to the neighbor.

In its inner meaning, the story has a very clear application for all of us. A son pictures a new development of truth. Isaac, in particular, represents the “spiritual rational,” our higher reasoning power. We like to think of this as our own, and Abraham’s prompting to give up Isaac pictures our recognition that our reasoning power, like every other good thing in us, is not really our own, but the Lord’s in us. Sometimes people, recognizing this, are tempted to give up trying to reason about religion. This is like killing Isaac. But the Lord does not want this. He has given us our reason to use, and wants us to use it freely, but it should be directed by His truth into the paths of service. Our understanding of how to do the

Lord's will has been confused by false ideas and ideals in the world about us; it is like the ram caught in the thicket by the horns. We need to save Isaac alive and sacrifice the ram—that is, to continue to use our reason, but to submit our ideas of what is good and useful to the guidance of the Lord's truth. We have all had the experience of trying to help someone, and finding that we have done more harm than good. Our intention was good, but we lacked the wisdom to carry it out effectively. This is just why we need to develop and use our "spiritual rational" by studying the Word and the teachings of the church, and basing our thoughts and actions on a true knowledge of the Lord and of His purposes.

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### Adult

There are many good topics for discussion in this lesson: the nature of the higher rational, the false ideas of marriage and of worship which were in Abraham's mind, the Lord's permission of falsity in order to preserve the good intention, the true meaning of sacrifice.

We should have in mind that the first rational we develop in our childhood, represented by Ishmael, is what is called the "natural rational"—that is, it is the reasoning which bases its conclusions on natural knowledges (Hagar the Egyptian servant represents the affection for memory-knowledges), or sense experience, and on the outward appearance of things. It is a necessary step in our development and a necessary faculty all through our lives, since we must live practical lives in a finite world; and Ishmael, although he was banished from the Holy Land, became the father of a great nation.

Isaac represents the higher or spiritual rational, the rational which takes into account the Lord and spiritual things and recognizes that the outward appearance may be the opposite of the truth. Although Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born, he continued to live for another seventy-five years; so Isaac was a long time in coming into his full inheritance. The spiritual rational is slow in developing, and for a long time must

be kept close to childhood innocence and trust. Young people, when they begin to develop the ability to reason about spiritual things, need the protection of their early states of belief and wonder which the Lord has stored up in them as “remains.” And there is a point in the life of every child who is developing in the right direction at which he feels the temptation described in our story for today: the temptation to give up his newly discovered faculty of reasoning about spiritual things, lest it interfere with his childhood faith. In the churches about us in the world, there are many conscientious young people who make just this decision; and some churches encourage it, teaching that there are “mysteries” which we are not meant to understand and must accept “on faith.” Still others “sacrifice Isaac” in an easier and less conscientious way by promoting the idea that “it does not matter what you believe so long as you live well,” discarding all real thought about spiritual things in favor of mere external good works.

The literal sense of this brief story raises some basic questions. It is said that “God did tempt Abraham.” In the New Church we know that God never tempts, that all temptation comes from the hells and is the result of evils in our inheritance or in our environment or resulting from our own sins. We also know that the Lord never permits a temptation to present itself to us except as He sees that we are able to resist it with His help, if we will (see I Cor. 10:13). He constantly withholds all other temptations from us. Read, in this regard, the excerpt from the writings at the end of this chapter.

But we all tend to blame the Lord for all our troubles, tacitly if not openly. With Abraham this tendency was very natural. We have seen that he grew up among the people of the Ancient Church in its last perverted stage. He had many falsities in his mind. One of them was the belief that multiple marriages were permissible; hence his acceptance of Hagar. Another was the thought that God was a jealous God and needed to be propitiated. And another was the idea that it was laudable to sacrifice one’s child, that this was the supreme sacrifice and hence must be especially pleasing to

God. We are told that the Lord never destroys falsities in our minds until we are ready to receive the truth in their place. Read the parable in Matthew 12:43-45. We are also told that He uses the falsities in which we are brought up so far as they can be made serviceable to keeping us in orderly living and capable of advancing into a knowledge of truth. This He did with Abraham. In the case of his temptation to sacrifice Isaac the Lord allowed him to go through with it to the point of the very act in order that he might be confirmed in his intention of putting the Lord first in his life, and could be shown that this intention was the real sacrifice which the Lord desired. The ram represents “the spiritual from the human race,” which is devotion to the Lord developed through conscience. And the ram was found “behind him” and was “caught in a thicket by his horns”; with Abraham this spiritual had been “entangled in natural knowledge” (AC 2831).

Once we have grasped the general meaning of the story, every detail of Abraham’s journey to Mount Moriah—the mount on which later Solomon’s temple was built—becomes full of meaning for us. “Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass.” Morning pictures the beginning of a new state and the ass pictures our natural reason. Abraham, having conceived a new purpose, acted upon it at once and began by bringing under control that faculty which so often rebels against our higher, spiritual promptings, but which can be made to serve them if our resolution is firm. This idea is further carried out in his taking the two young men, his servants, who picture the rational faculties already developed for service in his daily problems. “And he clave the wood of the burnt offering.” Wood, Swedenborg says (AC 2784), pictures “the good that is in works, and in justice,” and the cleaving of wood pictures placing merit in this good. The placing of merit in one’s own good works—except by the Lord in whom is all merit—is in itself an evil, but it can be made to serve a use when the end sought is the burnt offering, a genuine desire to serve the Lord. But when the mountain was in sight, the two young men and the ass were left behind to wait, and the wood was carried up the

mountain by Isaac. So we, when we are prompted to some new dedication of our lives to the Lord, often start out with very natural thoughts about what our service will be and even with a good deal of self-praise; but if we persevere—the three days' journey pictures a fully developed state—the mountain does come in sight, and we leave our natural selfish thoughts and reasonings behind, and our new spiritual thought bears the credit for our good deeds up the mountain to the Lord. And the whole experience is then crowned by the realization that to consecrate our reasoning powers to the Lord does not mean to give them up, but to find blessing and fulfillment through them (verses 15-18). And after this realization we can safely return to the exercise of our natural reasoning faculty in our daily activities. "So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba." Beersheba signifies "the doctrine of charity and faith which was Divine and to which human rational things were adjoined" (AC 2858).

In AC 2767-2859 Swedenborg gives the interpretation of this whole story in its inmost sense, relating to the Lord's life. He shows us how the Lord admitted temptation through His human rational to the very utmost. In AC 2786 we read: "As regards the state itself, it is . . . the state which the Lord assumed when He underwent temptations, and here that which he assumed when He underwent the most grievous and inmost temptations. His first preparation for that state was that He entered into a state of peace and innocence, and that He prepared the natural man in Himself, as also the rational, so that they should serve the Divine rational, and that He adjoined the merit of righteousness, and in this manner elevated Himself." And in AC 2795 we read: "The Lord could not be tempted at all when He was in the Divine Itself, for the Divine is infinitely above all temptation; but He could be tempted as to His human. This is the reason why when He was to undergo the most grievous and inmost temptations, He adjoined to Himself the prior human, that is, the rational and the natural of it, as described in verse 3; and why He afterwards separated Himself

from these.” An interesting statement is found in AC 2816: “It is according to the internal sense, that the Lord’s Divine led His Human into the most grievous temptations.” We may think of this when we pray “Lead us not into temptation.” The Lord had power to overcome every temptation and so “led” Himself into them. The form of our prayer suggests that we recognize that we have no power of ourselves, and would flee temptation as far as the Lord sees it to be possible. AC 2819 is a wonderful summary of the whole doctrine concerning temptation.

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#### From the Writings of Swedenborg

*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 2768: “Its being said that ‘God did tempt,’ is according to the sense of the letter, in which temptations and many other things are attributed to God; but it is according to the internal sense that God tempts no one; but in the time of temptations is continually liberating from them, as far as possible, or as far as the liberation does no harm, and is continually looking to the good into which He is leading him who is in the temptations; for God never takes part in temptations in any other manner; and though it is predicated of Him that He permits, still it is not according to the idea which man has of permission, namely, that by permitting He concurs. Man cannot comprehend it in any other manner than that he who permits is also willing; but it is the evil within the man which causes, and even leads into the temptation; and no cause of this is in God—as the cause is not in the king or in the judge, when a man does evil and suffers punishment therefor. For he who separates himself from the laws of Divine order, all of which are the laws of good and thence of truth, casts himself into the laws that are opposite to Divine order, which are those of evil and falsity, and thence of punishments and torments.”

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#### Suggested Questions on the Lesson

- P. Who was Abram’s wife? *Sarai*
- P. What was the name of their only son? *Isaac*
- J. How old were Abraham and Sarah when Isaac was born? *a hundred, ninety*
- J. What was Abraham tempted to do? *sacrifice Isaac*
- J. Why did he think he ought to sacrifice Isaac? *thought God wanted him to give up his dearest possession*
- I. Why did the Lord let him think this? *to test his faith*



- J. Where was Abraham told to go for the sacrifice? *Mount Moriah*
- J. What was later built on Mount Moriah? *Temple*
- J. How long was the journey? *three days*
- J. Who went with Abraham and Isaac? *two young men*
- J. What did they take with them? *ass, wood, fire, knife*
- P. Who went up the mountain? *Isaac, Abraham*
- J. What did Isaac ask? *where is lamb?*
- J. What did Abraham answer? *God will provide*
- P. When did the Lord stop Abraham? *as he raised knife*
- P. How did He stop him? *angel*
- P. What did Abraham find to sacrifice instead of Isaac? *ram*
- I. Does temptation really come from the Lord? *no*
- I. Why does the Lord permit us to be tempted? *to strengthen our character*
- S. What does Isaac represent? *spiritual rational*
- S. How are people today tempted to sacrifice Isaac? *stop reasoning about religion*
- S. What is meant by the substitution of a ram for Isaac in the sacrifice?  
*continue to reason, but submit our ideas of what is good and useful to the guidance of the Lord's truth*