According to the biblical account, Abram (“The Father [or God] Is Exalted”), who is later named Abraham (“The Father of Many Nations”), a native of [Ur](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/618946/Ur) in Mesopotamia, is called by God (Yahweh) to leave his own country and people and journey to an undesignated land, where he will become the founder of a new nation. He obeys the call unquestioningly and (at 75 years of age) proceeds with his barren wife, Sarai, later named [Sarah](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/523897/Sarah) (“Princess”), his nephew Lot, and other companions to the land of [Canaan](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/578986/Syrian-and-Palestinian-religion) (between Syria and Egypt).

There the childless septuagenarian receives repeated promises and a covenant from God that his “seed” will inherit the land and become a numerous nation. He not only has a son, [Ishmael](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/295333/Ishmael), by his wife’s maidservant [Hagar](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251469/Hagar) but has, at 100 years of age, by Sarah, a legitimate son, [Isaac](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/294933/Isaac), who is to be the heir of the promise. Yet Abraham is ready to obey God’s command to sacrifice Isaac, a test of his faith, which he is not required to consummate in the end because God substitutes a ram. At Sarah’s death, he purchases the [cave of Machpelah](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/354705/Cave-of-Machpelah) near [Hebron](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/259126/Hebron), together with the adjoining ground, as a family burying place. It is the first clear ownership of a piece of the promised land by Abraham and his posterity. Toward the end of his life, he sees to it that his son Isaac marries a girl from his own people back in Mesopotamia rather than a Canaanite woman. Abraham dies at the age of 175 and is buried next to Sarah in the cave of Machpelah.

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1544/Abraham

ABRAHAM feared God and obeyed His commandments; and God promised to bless Abraham very greatly. He gave him riches in cattle, and silver, and gold; and said that the land of Canaan should belong to him and his descendants. God also gave him a son in his old age, whom be loved very dearly and named Isaac. But God intended to try Abraham, to see if he loved Him above all else.

One day God told Abraham to take his son Isaac, and to journey into the land of Mount Moriah. There he was to build an altar and offer Isaac as a sacrifice. It was a strange command, but Abraham knew that God would not bid him do what was wrong, and believed that even if he slew his son, God was able to raise him to life again. So he rose early in the morning saddled his ass, took two of his young men, and wood for the fire; and then, accompanied by Isaac, started on his journey.

On the third day they came near the place God had pointed out, and Abraham left the young men with the ass, while he and his son journeyed up the mountain alone. As they went along, Isaac -- who carried the wood, while his father carried the knife and the fire, said: "My father." And Abraham replied, "Here am I, my son." Then Isaac said: "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham answered: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

The altar was built, Isaac was bound and laid upon it, and Abraham's arm was uplifted to strike the blow that was to take his son's life away. Then God called to Abraham, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." Abraham looked up, and behind him saw a ram which was caught in a thicket by its horns; this he took and offered as a sacrifice to God.

So God tried Abraham; and also Himself provided the lamb for the burnt offering, as Abraham had said.