

A dramatic scene featuring a whale's tail breaching the surface of a dark blue, stormy sea. The sky is filled with bright, jagged lightning bolts, and rain is falling diagonally across the frame. The overall atmosphere is intense and powerful.

EPIC TALES

RELEARNING THE ANCIENT BIBLE STORIES IN A BRAND-NEW WAY

Abraham Offers Isaac




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Genesis 17



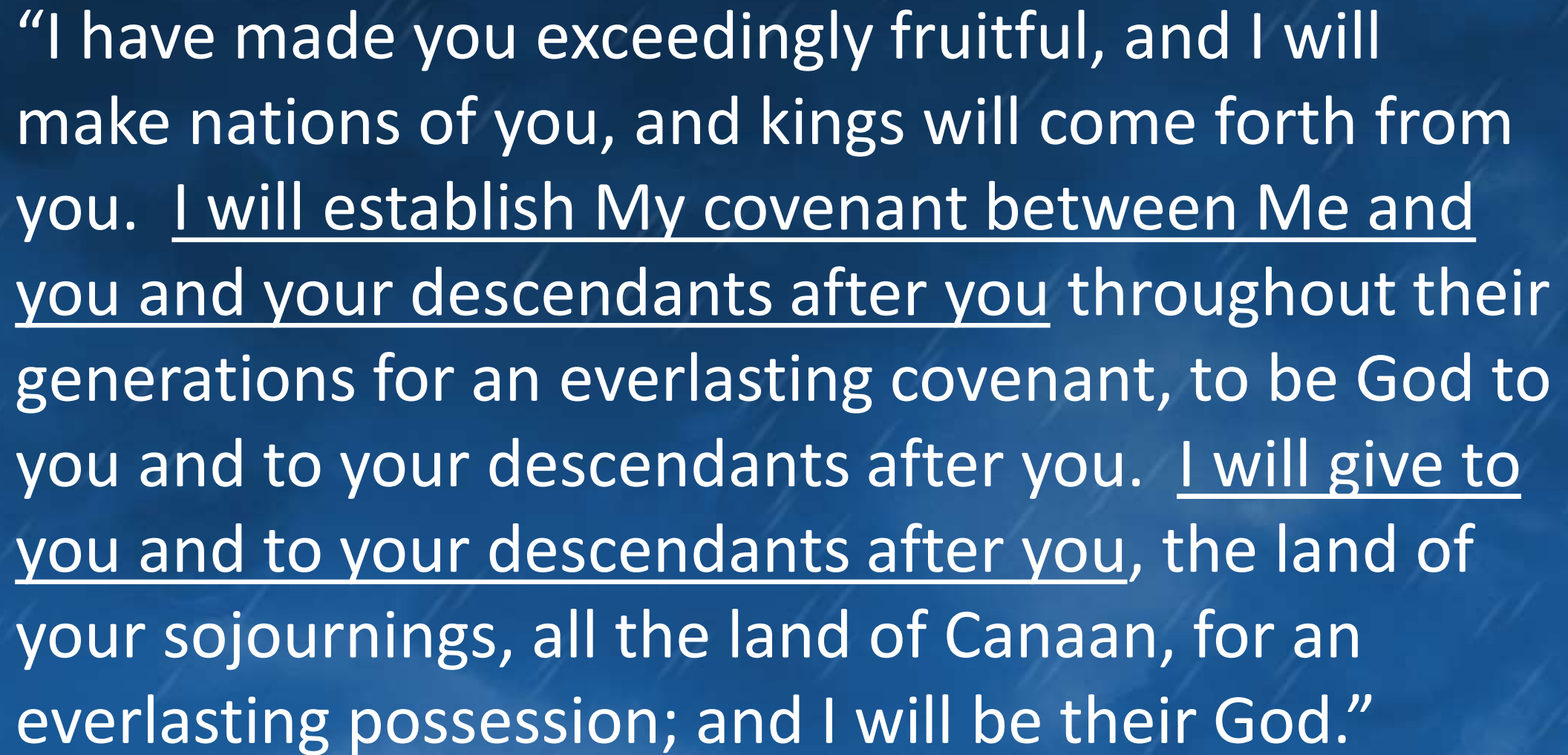
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A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, positioned on the left side of the image. The background is a deep blue sky and sea.

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty [El Shaddai אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי]; walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.” Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram אַבְרָם, but your name shall be Abraham אַבְרָהָם; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.”

Genesis 17:1-5


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A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean under a clear sky. The tail is dark and has a white patch at the top. The water is a deep blue with some white foam at the base of the tail.

“I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 17:6-8

EPIC TALES

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean, set against a blue sky and sea background. The tail is dark and curved, with white markings on its underside.

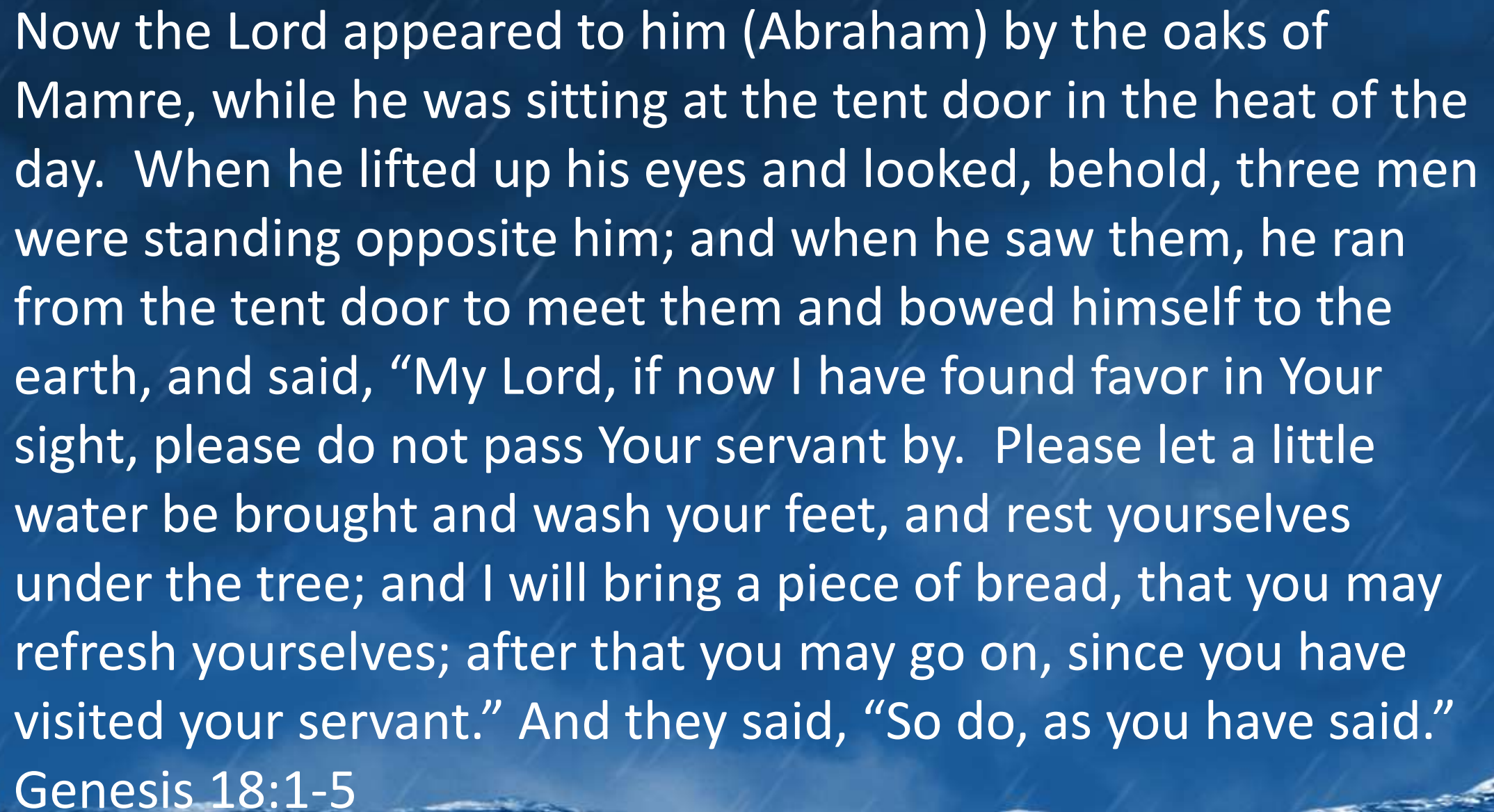
But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”
Genesis 17:19

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Genesis 18


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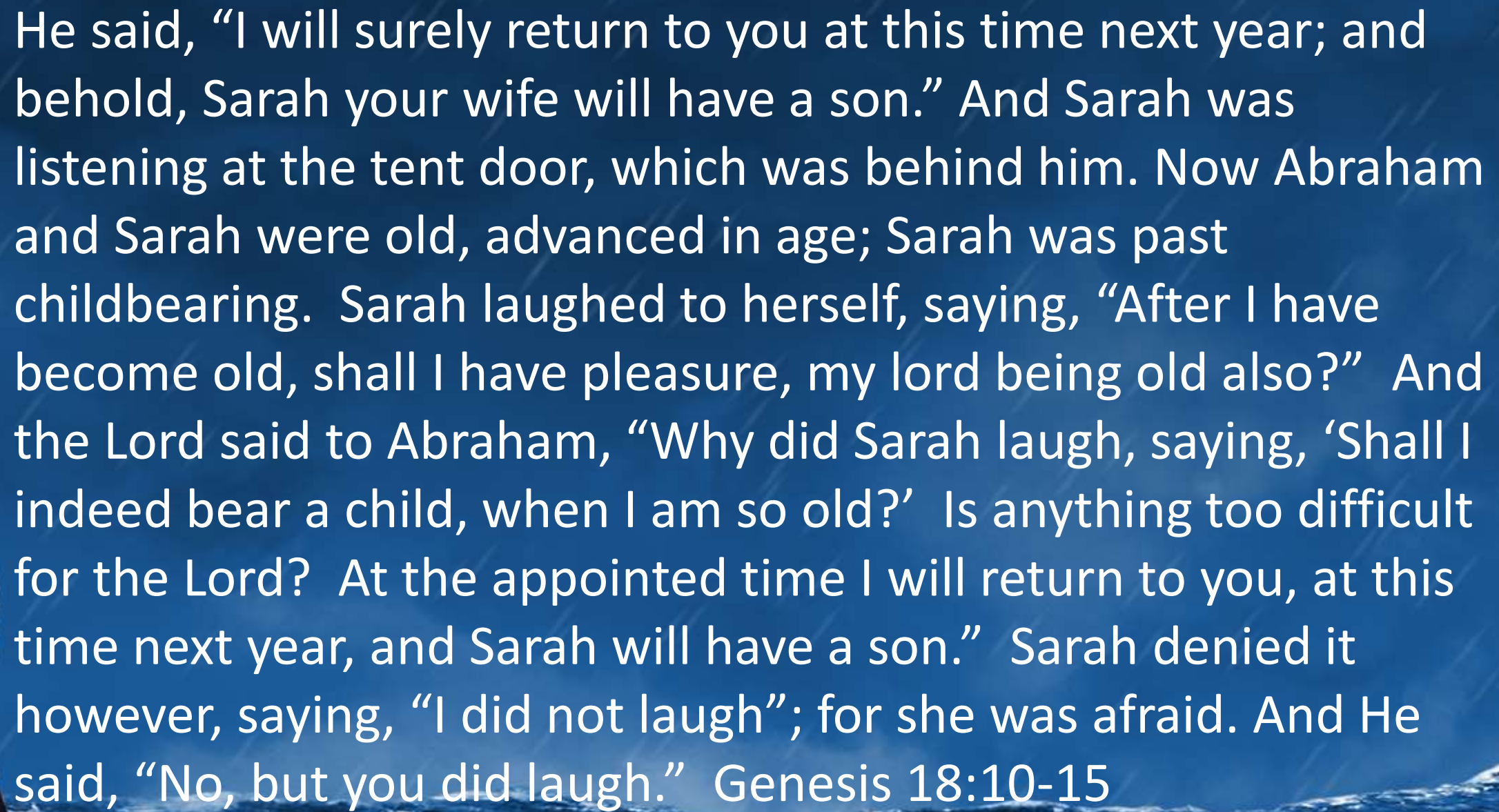
Now the Lord appeared to him (Abraham) by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant.” And they said, “So do, as you have said.”
Genesis 18:1-5

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A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, set against a background of a blue sky with light rain or mist. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the base where it meets the water.

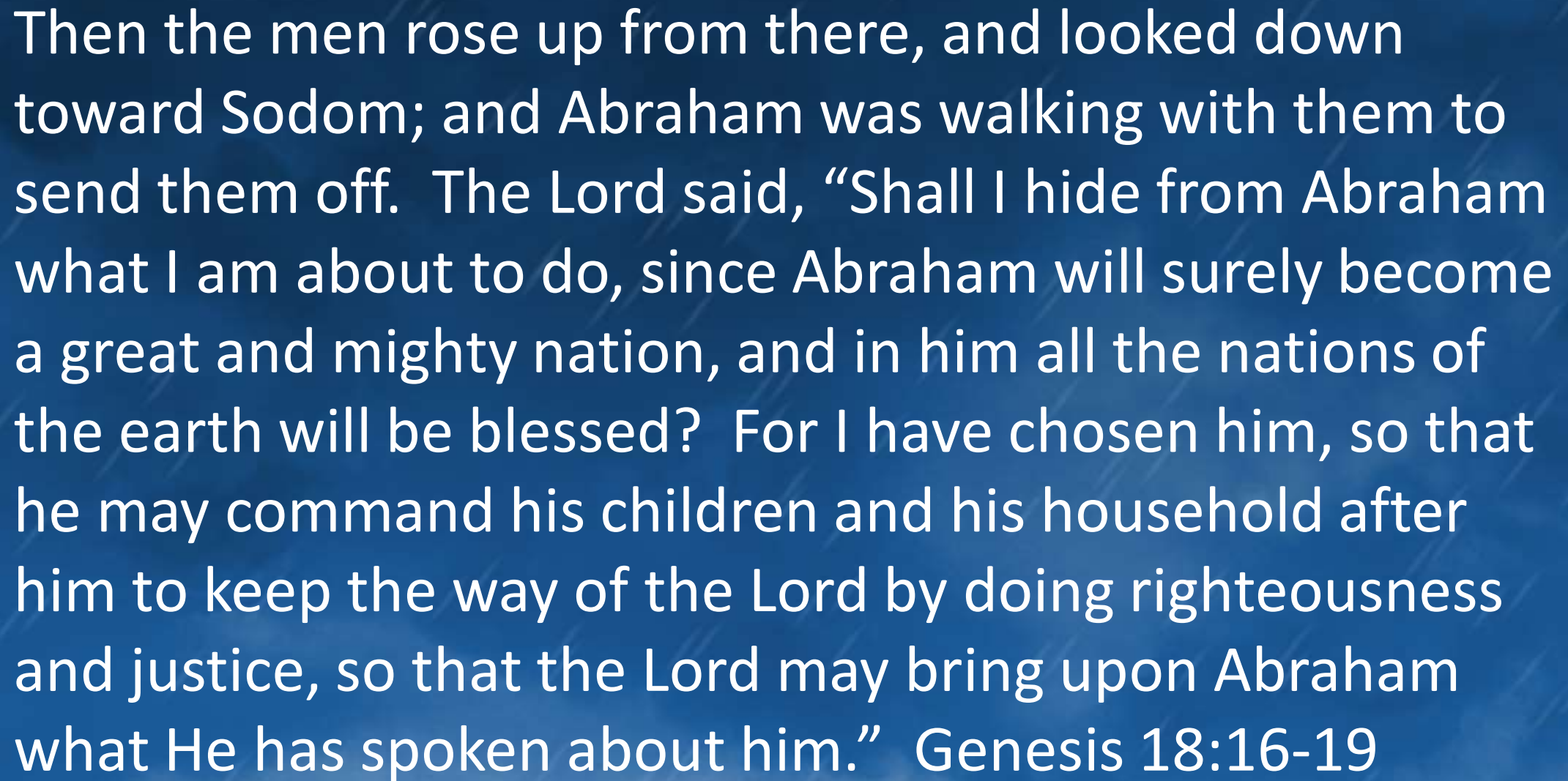
So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes.” Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate. Then they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” Genesis 18:6-9

EPIC TALES

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, set against a dark blue background with a subtle starburst pattern. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

He said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?” And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?’ Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” Sarah denied it however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh.” Genesis 18:10-15

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A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit. The water is a deep blue with white-capped waves. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.


Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off. The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? For I have chosen him, so 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 upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.” Genesis 18:16-19

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And the Lord said, “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.” Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord. Genesis 18:20-22

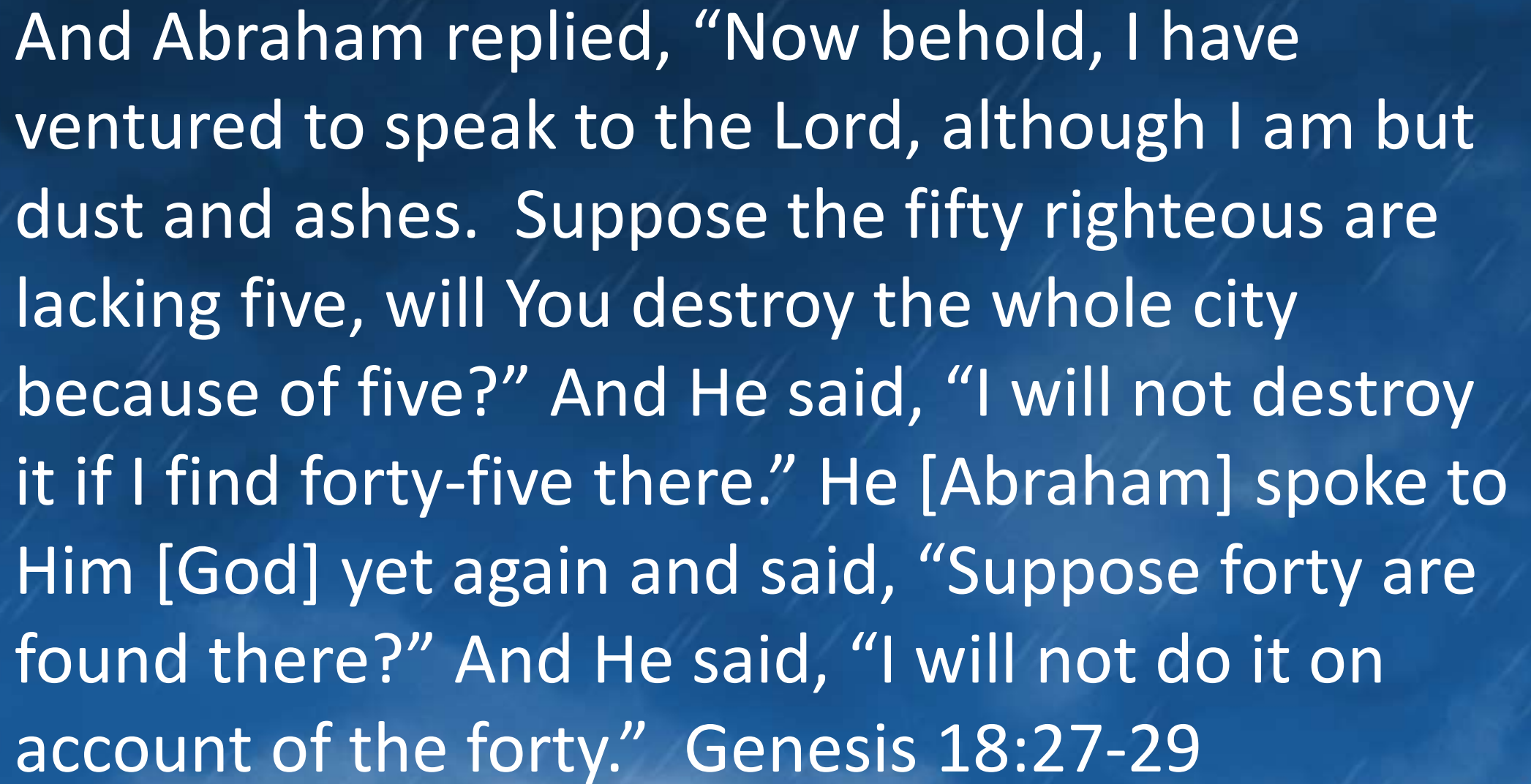
A large whale tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the dark blue ocean. The tail is dark and has a lighter patch near the top. The ocean is choppy with white foam from the waves.

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A close-up photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the dark blue ocean, creating white foam at the base. The background is a vast, deep blue sky with a subtle pattern of light rays.

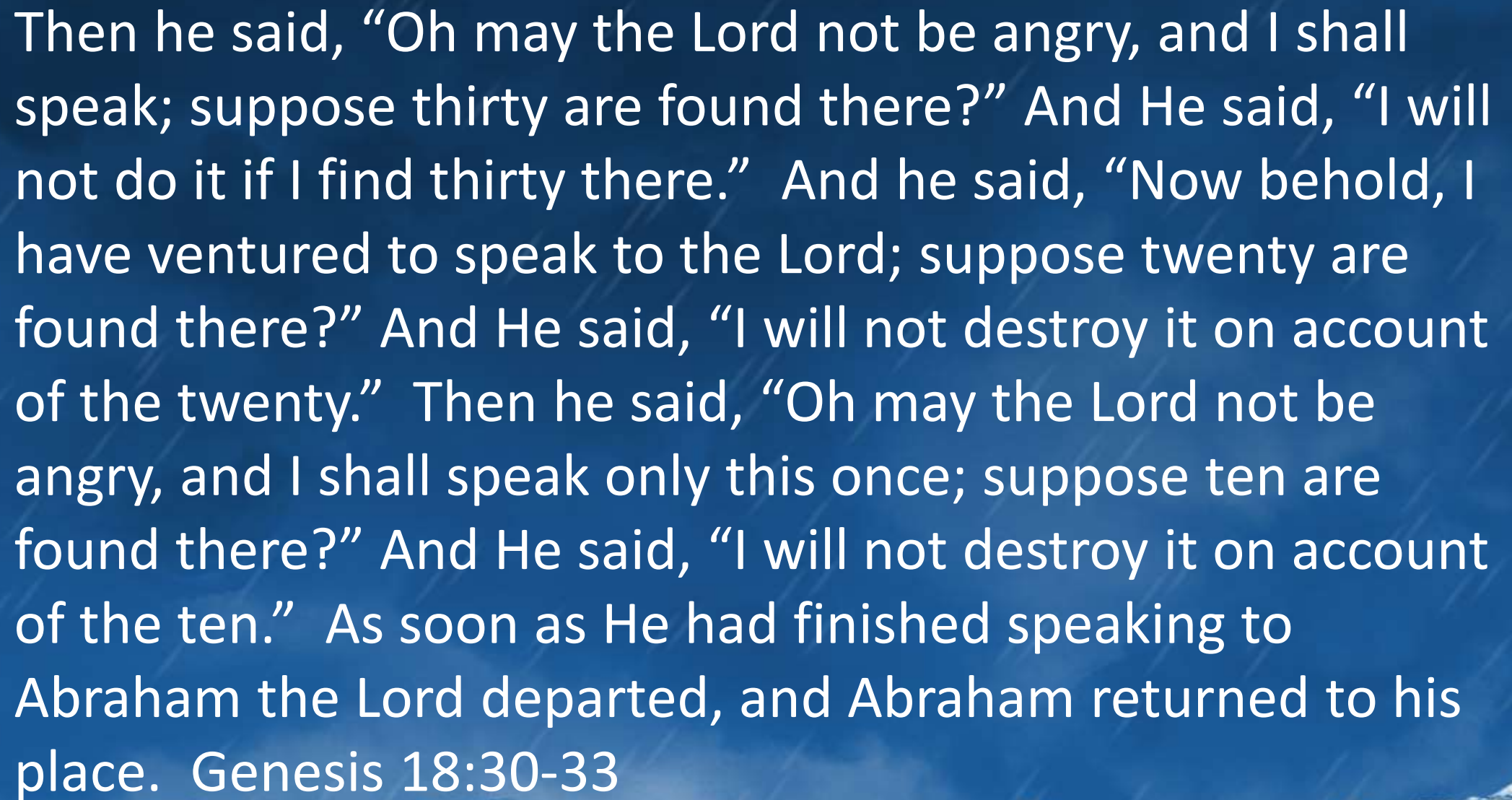
Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” So the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.” Genesis 18:23-26

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A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean, set against a blue sky with light rain falling. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the base where it meets the water. The ocean is a deep blue with white-capped waves.

And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes. Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?” And He said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” He [Abraham] spoke to Him [God] yet again and said, “Suppose forty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do it on account of the forty.” Genesis 18:27-29

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Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” And he said, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it on account of the twenty.” Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it on account of the ten.” As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the Lord departed, and Abraham returned to his place. Genesis 18:30-33

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Genesis 21



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The Promised Gift Arrives

Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac [יִצְחָק: “laughter” in Hebrew]. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” Genesis 21:1-6

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Genesis 22



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

- This was a test for Abraham (the father) not a test for Isaac (the son)
- Abraham knew about this assignment for 3 days before the incident
- The promised nation of descendants was to be through Isaac, not Ismael
- Abraham knew that child sacrifice was wrong and had taught that truth to his family and others... now would he be participating in it?
- Abraham would have to live with the results of this for the rest of his life

- Rabbi Marty Goodman

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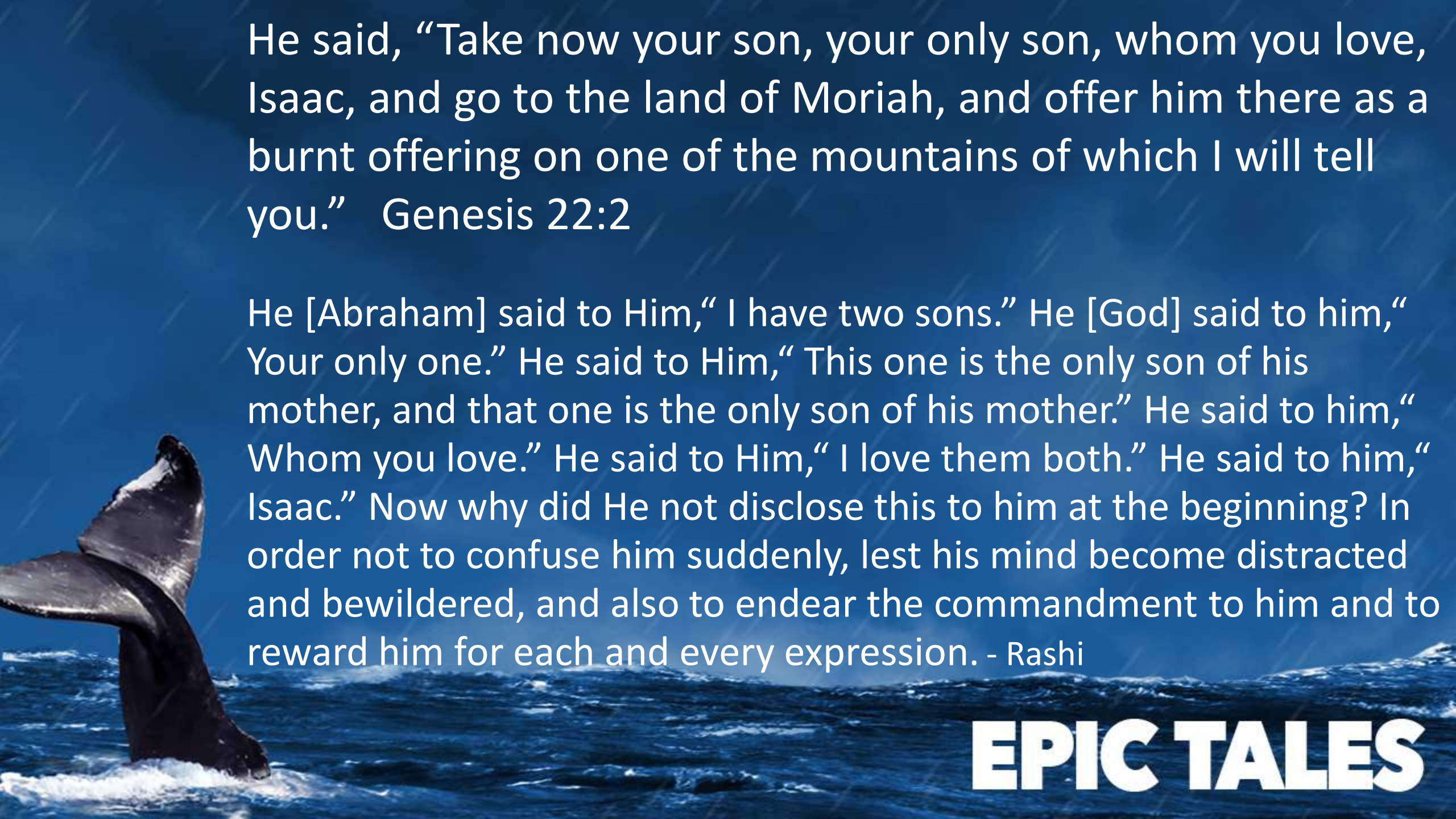


He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.” Genesis 22:2

- Hebrew verb “take” לָקַח laqach is a request from God, not a command... no threat of punishment if Abraham refused
- God did not say “slaughter” him
- God said “offer” him – Hebrew verb אָלַח alah
- Killing Isaac was not God’s plan, but Abraham would not know that until later. In other words, “Bring him up and then take him down.”

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A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean under a clear sky. The tail is dark and has a white patch at the top. The water is a deep blue with some white foam at the base of the tail.

He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.” Genesis 22:2

He [Abraham] said to Him, “I have two sons.” He [God] said to him, “Your only one.” He said to Him, “This one is the only son of his mother, and that one is the only son of his mother.” He said to him, “Whom you love.” He said to Him, “I love them both.” He said to him, “Isaac.” Now why did He not disclose this to him at the beginning? In order not to confuse him suddenly, lest his mind become distracted and bewildered, and also to endear the commandment to him and to reward him for each and every expression. - Rashi

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“go to the land of Moriah”



The distance from Beersheba to Mount Moriah was about 50 miles, a three day's journey to ponder this calling from the Lord.

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Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
2 Chronicles 3:1



Modern view of Temple Mount in Jerusalem, built on Mount Moriah

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Why did Abraham argue for the protection of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18 but never argue for the protection of Isaac in Genesis 22?

- We have no scriptural answer.
 - Some say it was because Genesis 18 was a decision by God that Abraham was not called to participate in, but Genesis 22 was a direct command by God to a person who obeyed faithfully.
 - Some say that it was because God initiated the conversation in Genesis 22 (so Abraham obeyed) while Abraham initiated the conversation in Genesis 18.
 - Some say it was because Abraham knew how glorious life with God after death (in heaven) would be for Isaac.
 - Some say that Abraham knew that he would not have to sacrifice Isaac because his descendants were promised; he was going to show the fallacy of child sacrifice, along with Abraham's words "we will return" (Genesis 22:5).

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Why wasn't Sarah included in the conversation?

We don't have a scriptural answer

- Some say Sarah would have tried to talk Abraham out of it
- Some say to make the test harder for Abraham... because she would have encouraged Abraham to obey God

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Will You Obey God's Call?

So Abraham [137 years old] rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son [37 years old]; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place [maqom מָקוֹם] of which God had told him.

Genesis 22:3

- * God did not say when to go. He could have delayed in obedience.
- * Abraham split the wood early so there would be no excuse at the place of the sacrifice if no wood was present there.
- * “Those that do the will of God heartily will do it speedily; while we delay, time is lost and the heart hardened.” – Matthew Henry's Commentary

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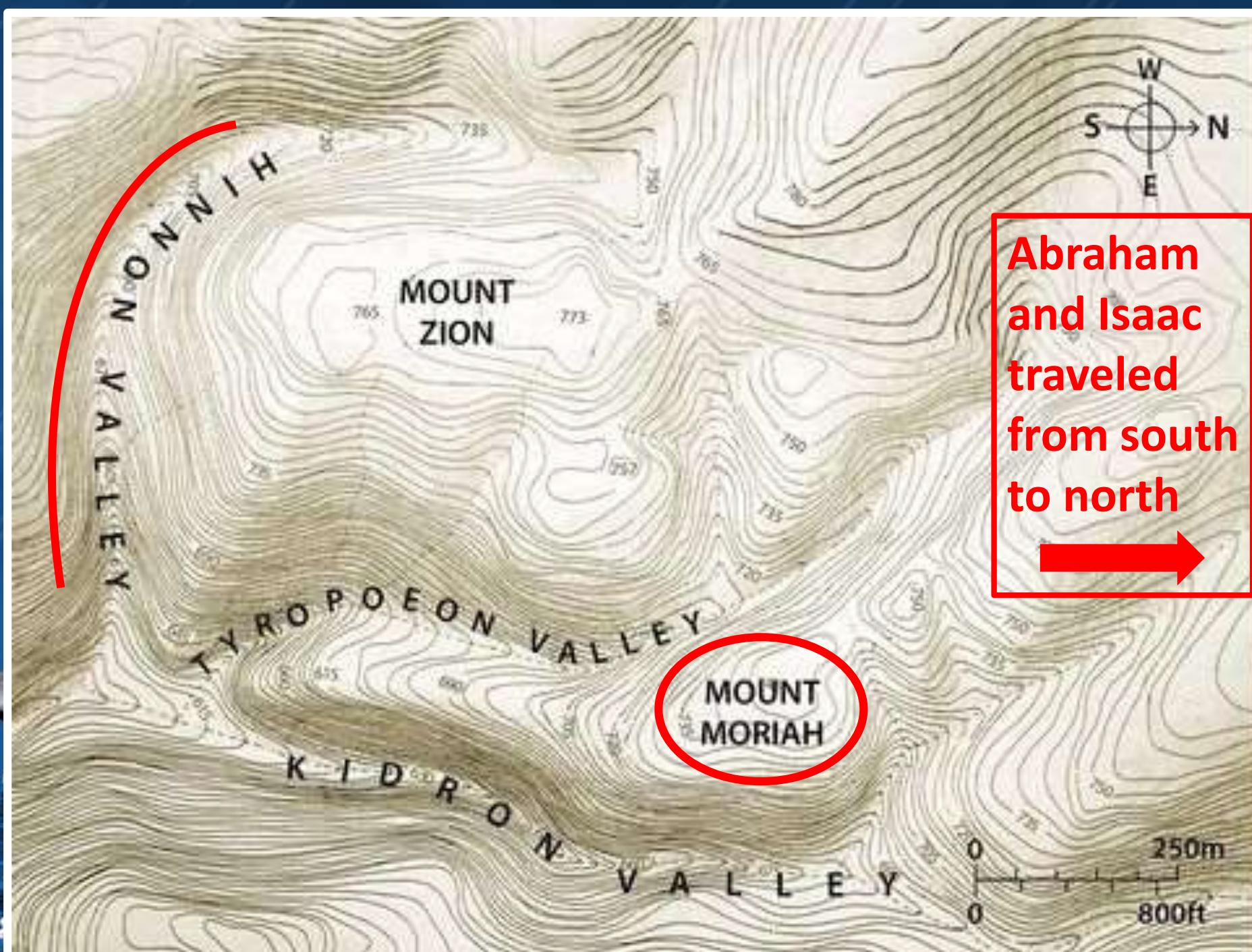
The route taken by Abraham and Isaac



Way of the Patriarchs דֶּרֶךְ הָאֲבוֹת Derech ha'Avot

Literally “Way of the Fathers” is an ancient north south route traversing the land of Israel. The name is used by biblical scholars because it was frequently travelled by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. - Wikipedia

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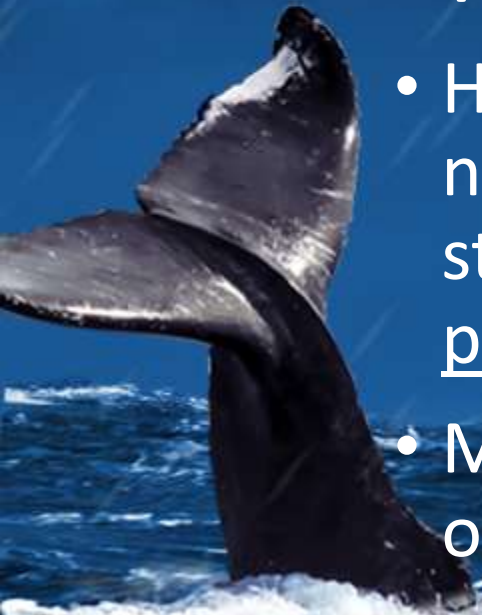


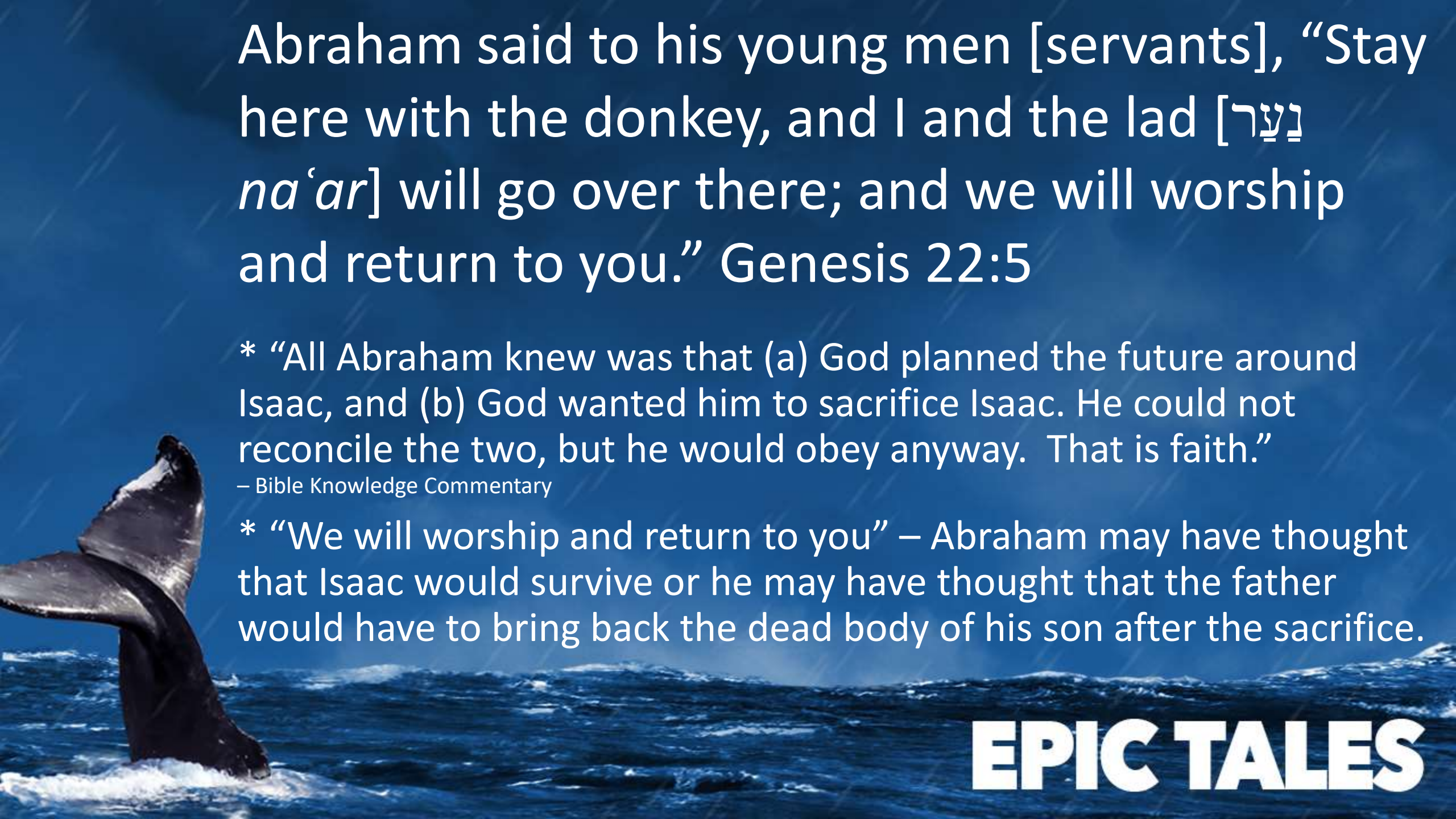
- One lesson of this story was to teach humanity that child sacrifice is evil
- Abraham and Isaac had to pass through the Hinnom Valley to get to Mount Moriah; this valley was the place where the Canaanites carried out child sacrifices

On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place [maqom מְקוֹם] from a distance. Genesis 22:4

- “place” in Hebrew is maqom מְקוֹם and can also be a name for God
- Abraham saw the “place” from afar... he saw God from afar
- That is how Abraham knew where to bring Isaac... he brought him to God and God was waiting for him there
- We read this same word in the Jacob’s Ladder story in Genesis 28
- He [Jacob] came to a certain place [maqom מְקוֹם] and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place [maqom מְקוֹם]. Genesis 28:11
- Maqom is the place of God’s presence, a place to find God, an opportunity to grow spiritually

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A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, set against a background of a blue sky with light rays. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the base where it meets the water.

Abraham said to his young men [servants], “Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad [נֵעָר *na‘ar*] will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.” Genesis 22:5

* “All Abraham knew was that (a) God planned the future around Isaac, and (b) God wanted him to sacrifice Isaac. He could not reconcile the two, but he would obey anyway. That is faith.”

– Bible Knowledge Commentary

* “We will worship and return to you” – Abraham may have thought that Isaac would survive or he may have thought that the father would have to bring back the dead body of his son after the sacrifice.

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- 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 the two of them walked on together. Genesis 22:6
- Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Genesis 22:7
 - They have been walking three days, Isaac knew full well that there was no sacrificial animal present. The son waited until they were alone to ask the question of the father... a sign of respect and spiritual maturity.
- Abraham said, “God [אֱלֹהִים Elohim] will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. Genesis 22:8
- In verse 6, Isaac does not know he will be the sacrifice
- In verse 8, Isaac does know he will be the sacrifice (learned in verse 7)
- Isaac walks the same both times... showing trust and obedience and faithfulness... to his earthly father and to his Heavenly Father

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, positioned on the left side of the slide.

EPIC TALES

Then they came to the place [maqom מְקוֹם] of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar [מִזְבֵּחַ mizbeach] there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. Genesis 22:9-10

* You would not normally tie up an animal for sacrifice. Some say that this was a request from Isaac so that the son would not become afraid and try to run away from his much older father.

A close-up photograph of a whale's tail fluke as it breaks the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The whale is dark grey or black, and the background is a deep blue sea under a clear sky.

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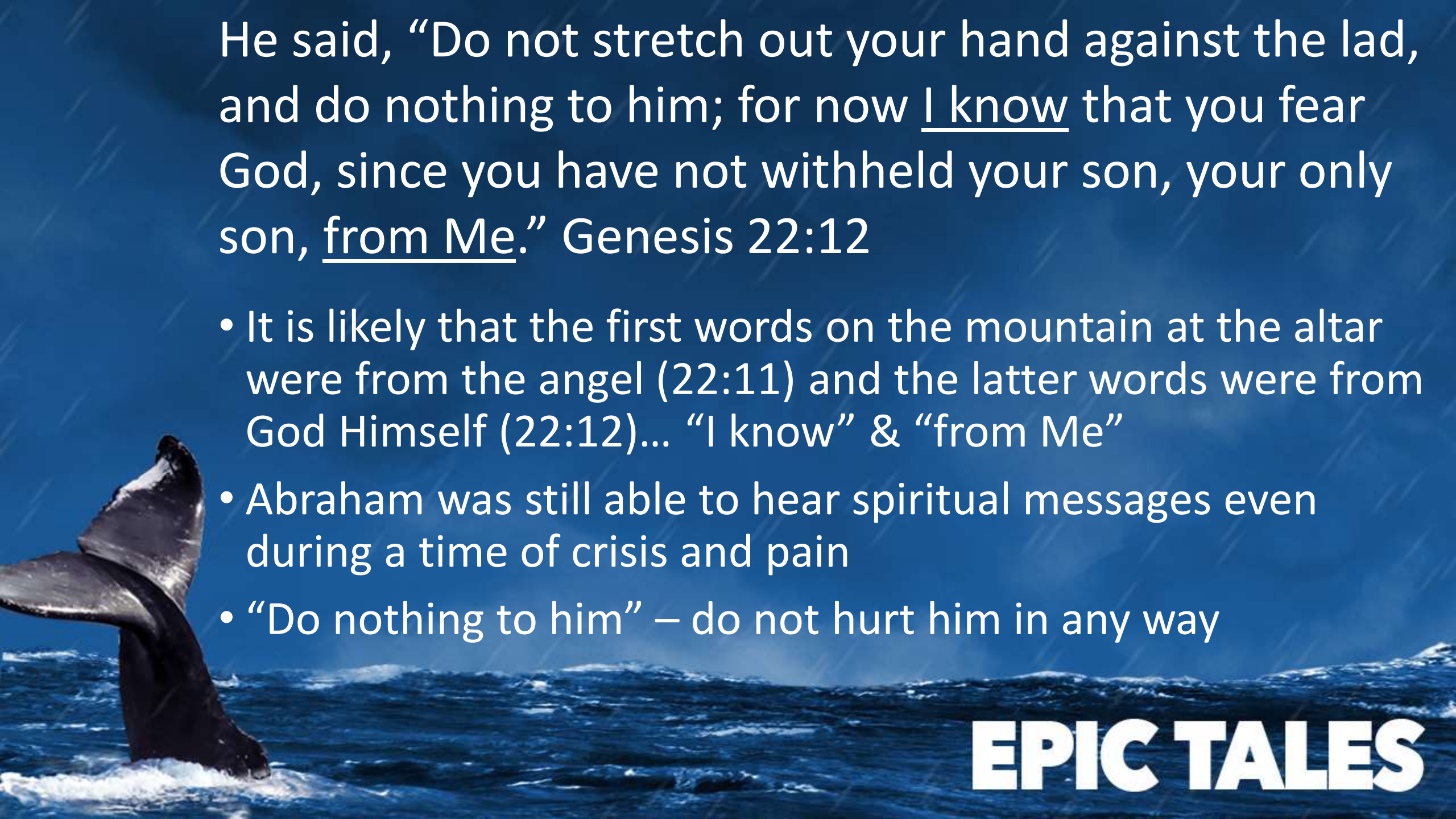
But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” Genesis 22:11

- First message was from God Himself (Genesis 22:1-2), now this message is from an angel (22:11)
- The repetition of Abraham’s name is a sign of love and endearment, like...

When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Exodus 3:4

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A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, set against a background of a blue sky with light rain or mist. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the base where it meets the water.

He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” Genesis 22:12

- It is likely that the first words on the mountain at the altar were from the angel (22:11) and the latter words were from God Himself (22:12)... “I know” & “from Me”
- Abraham was still able to hear spiritual messages even during a time of crisis and pain
- “Do nothing to him” – do not hurt him in any way

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Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place [מָקוֹם maqom] The Lord Will Provide [Yahweh Yireh יְהוָה יִרְאֶה], as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the Lord it will be provided.” Genesis 22:13-14

- Yahweh Yireh יְהוָה יִרְאֶה = the Lord provides, is our Provider
- When I sacrifice to the Lord, He will provide
- What do you need Him to provide?

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Blessing Follows Obedience

Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you” Genesis 22:15-16

- The best evidence of our fearing God is our being willing to serve and honor him with that which is dearest to us, and to part with all to him or for him. – Matthew Henry’s Commentary
- What does “greatly bless” mean?
- “In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:14

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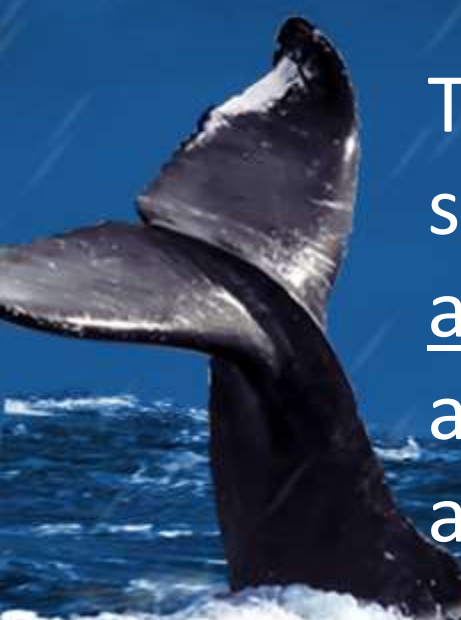


“because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” Genesis 22:16b-18

- These are the last recorded words spoken by God to Abraham.
- To fear God means to reverence Him as sovereign, trust Him implicitly, and obey Him without question. – Bible Knowledge Commentary
- Although we are told it was a test, for Abraham God’s command was totally real. It was appalling emotionally and theologically, for on Isaac all the promises of blessing depended for fulfilment. Torn between love for his child and obedience to God, Abraham faced agonizing choices. Step by step, faith and hope triumphed over fear and doubt until the knife was raised to slay his son. In this way he showed he was willing to put God’s call above every other commitment and emotional attachment, and at that moment the test ended.
– New Bible Commentary

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, creating white foam at the base. The background is a clear blue sky.

EPIC TALES



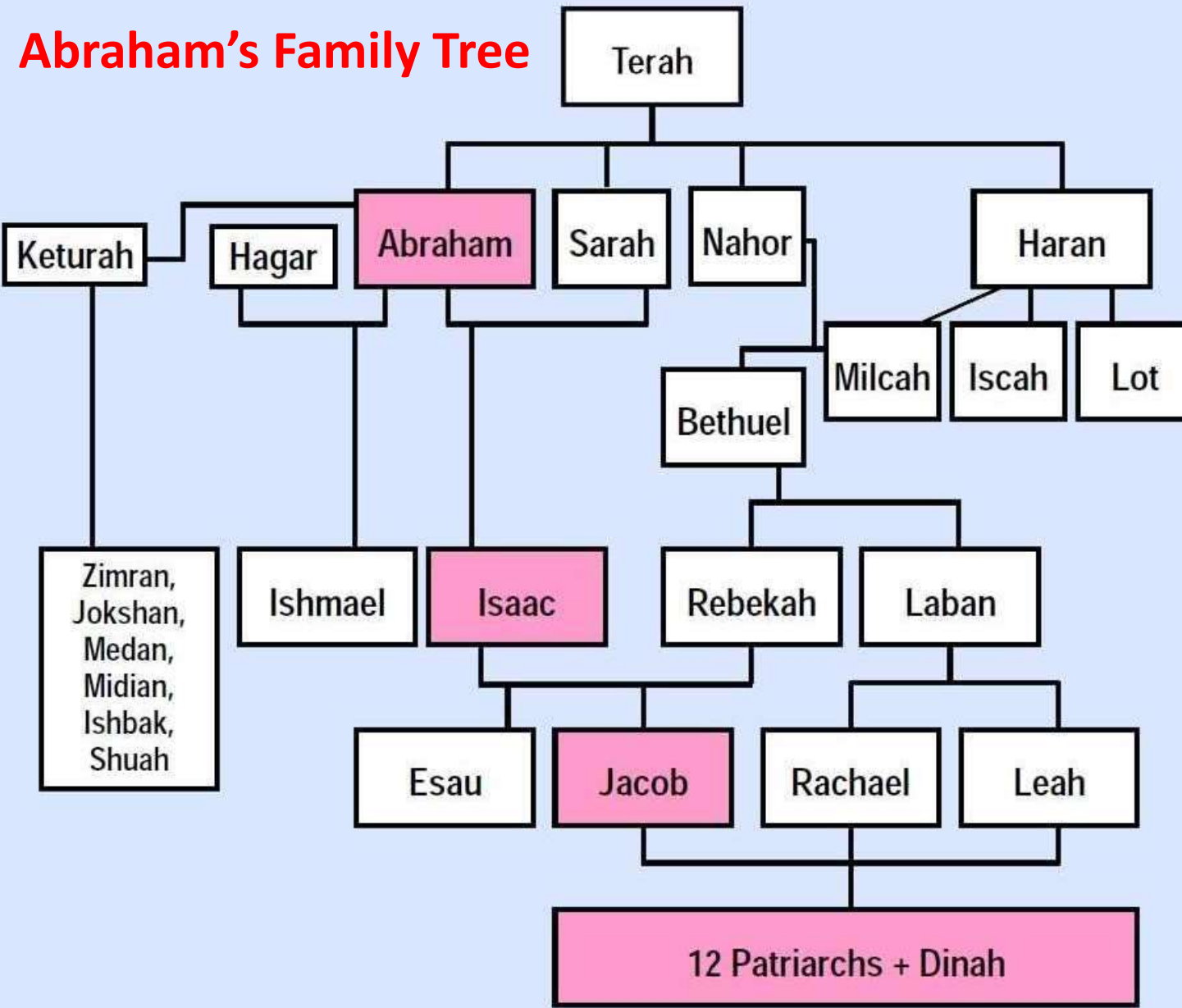
So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba. Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, “Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor:” Genesis 22:19-20

The man of God returned to Beersheba aglow with the sense of the presence of God. He would never be the same again. The great promises had been renewed, and he was assured that the covenant blessings would come upon him and his descendants.

– Wycliffe Bible Commentary

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Abraham's Family Tree



“Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel.” Bethuel became the father of **Rebekah**; these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah. Genesis 22:21-24



Lessons from Abraham's life

A life of FAITH:

1. involves receiving a new identity
2. involves hearing and doing
3. involves actions
4. involves choices
5. requires daily re-commitments
6. involves falling and getting back up
7. has multiple challenges
8. is promised blessings
9. involves continuous testing
10. can be a model for future generations

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The Sacrifice of a Son

Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering” Genesis 22:8

Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Abraham was ready to give up his son for a sacrifice to the honor of God and God promised to give His Son as a sacrifice for the salvation of man. – Matthew Henry’s Commentary



The Sacrifice of a Beloved Son

- Isaac was the son of promise born to a father who loved him and wanted him.
- Jesus is the Son of promise, born to a Heavenly Father who loves Him and wants Him. That is the Christmas story.
- Isaac was the son of Sarah, whose heart must have been broken when she considered the sacrifice required by the Lord.
- Jesus is the son of Mary, whose heart must have been broken when she considered the sacrifice required by the Lord.
- Isaac carried the wood of his own sacrifice (Genesis 22:6) and Jesus carried the wood of His own cross (John 19:17).

A large whale tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the blue ocean. The background is a deep blue sky with a subtle pattern of light rays.

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Isaac submitted to the will of his father in Genesis 22. Messiah Jesus submitted to the will of His Heavenly Father in Luke 22:42 when He prayed, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Romans 8:32