

TESTED UNTIL PERFECTED

PART # 1

11-10-24

THE OFFERING UP OF ISAAC BY ABRAHAM

GENESIS 22:1-19 – SERIES TEXT

GENESIS 22:1-3 – TODAY'S TEXT

“EVERYTHING THAT WILL ABIDE THE FIRE SHALL GO THROUGH THE FIRE,
THAT IT MAY BE BOTH PROVED AND IMPROVED... EVERY ONE OF US
SHALL BE TESTED”.
C. H.
SPURGEON

HAVE YOU EVER PRAYED THESE WORDS – THAT KING DAVID PRAYED?

PSALMS 139:23 – “SEARCH ME, OH GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART: TRY ME,
AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS”:

PSALMS 139:24 – “AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME, AND
LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING”.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER PRAYED THESE WORDS – IF NOT – WHY NOT?

Have you ever heard anyone say, “Don’t ever ask for patience”? Because God will put things in your life and test or try you! Well, that may be true, but “Patience” is something to be desired for, and not to run from. A person who learns “Patience” through trials will be much more prepared, in the way of “Everlasting”.

CHRIST JESUS SAYS THAT “OUR PATIENCE SHOULD POSSESS OUR SOULS” – ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST DAYS – BEFORE THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST JESUS” (LUKE 21:19)!

Invite divine inspection, and, if God shall come and by some extraordinary trial, test you, be not cast down on the account, but rather take it, as the very choice favor that God, that the God of the universe - would love you that much and be concerned about you that much, and to try and test you, like pure gold, refined by fire!

The last three presidential elections, as the main slogan or at least part of the conversation, for election as president, have been “Hope and change”. But these are just political campaign promises because we certainly have seen “Change,” but how about “Hope”?

THIS IS HOW THE APOSTLE PAUL SAYS THAT WE CAN HAVE “HOPE” IN OUR LIVES:

ROMANS 5:2 – “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD”.

ROMANS 5:3 – “And not only so, BUT WE GLORY IN TRIBULATION (TRIALS AND TESTINGS FROM GOD) ALSO: KNOWING THAT TRIBULATION (TRIALS AND TESTINGS) WORKETH PATIENCE”;

ROMANS 5:4 – “AND PATIENCE, EXPERIENCE, AND EXPERIENCE, HOPE.”

SO HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT ANOTHER “FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT” – “LONGSUFFERING” (GALATIANS 5:22)?

* BECAUSE WE ALL ARE FACED WITH THESE CHOICES – “WE CAN EITHER HAVE PATIENCE (WHICH RESULTS FROM TRIALS AND TESTINGS), OR WE CAN BE A (SUFFERING) PATIENT,” AND WE CAN HAVE “LONGSUFFERING”, AS A FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, OR WE CAN JUST SUFFER LONG IN THIS WORLD”!

The story found in GENESIS 22:1-19 is a familiar story in the Bible, about Abraham’s faith in God and his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. God tested Abraham to demonstrate to the angels and men that Abraham VALUED his relationship with God over his relationship with his beloved son, Isaac. The word “TEMPT” in English, in GENESIS 22:1, is the Strong's Hebrew word # 5254 and means “To prove, assay, try”.

THIS IS THE FIRST USAGE OF THIS WORD “TEMPT”, IN THE BIBLE, BUT THE WORD DOES NOT MEAN TO “TEMPT TO DO EVIL (JAMES 1:13), BUT IS USUALLY TRANSLATED “PROVE”. ALTHOUGH GOD KNEW WHAT ABRAHAM WOULD DO, IT STILL MUST BE “PROVED” TO ALL (INCLUDING EVEN ABRAHAM HIMSELF) THAT HE LOVED GOD MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE AND THAT HIS FAITH IN GOD AND HIS WORD, WAS ABSOLUTE.

HEBREWS 11:17 – “BY FAITH Abraham, when he was TRIED, OFFERED UP ISAAC: and he that had received the promise offered up his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON”,

HEBREWS 11:18 – “Of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called”:

HEBREWS 11:19 – “ACCOUNTING THAT GOD WAS ABLE TO RAISE HIM UP, EVEN FROM THE DEAD; from once also he received him in a FIGURE (AN EXAMPLE BY COMPARISON)”.

This testing of Abraham would glorify God in the sense that God’s love for Abraham would be manifested in Abraham’s love for God. Since Abraham responded in obedience to God’s command to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham “Proved” God’s love for him. This testing of Abraham glorified God in the sense that it reflected God the Father’s and God the Son’s love for each other. This test that God put Abraham through was difficult for a couple of reasons. The obvious difficulty is that Abraham loved Isaac, and the other was that Abraham had to deal with an apparent contradiction in the sense that God had promised Abraham that he would establish his covenant with Isaac, for an eternal covenant, with Isaac’s descendants after him, as recorded in GENESIS 17:19! IN HEBREWS 11:17-19, IT RECORDS THAT ABRAHAM RESOLVED THIS APPARENT CONFLICT, BELIEVING THAT GOD WOULD RAISE ISAAC FROM THE DEAD. LIKE MANY OF US, ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD BY “FAITH”, THAT GOD COULD RAISE ISAAC FROM THE DEAD, BUT HE HAD NEVER SEEN GOD DO THAT IN ANYONE’S LIFE!

* GENESIS 22:1-19 – RECORDS THE “SEVENTH” AND FINAL “GREAT CRISIS”, IN THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM, WHICH TESTED HIS LOVE FOR THE LORD, HIS FAITH IN THE LORD, AND HIS OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD. “SEVEN” IN THE BIBLE SYMBOLIZES “COMPLETENESS AND PERFECTION (BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL)”.

* GENESIS 22:1-19 – RECORDS THE “TWELFTH” AND FINAL TIME THAT ABRAHAM WAS “TESTED BY GOD”. THE NUMBER “TWELVE” IN THE BIBLE SYMBOLIZES THE COMPLETENESS OF GOD’S POWER AND AUTHORITY OR THE NATION OF ISRAEL AS A WHOLE. ABRAHAM’S “FINAL TEST” BY GOD, DEMONSTRATED THE “SPIRITUAL MATURITY” THAT ABRAHAM HAD BY “FAITH”, IN GOD AND HIS WORD!

JAMES 1:12 – “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is TRIED

(TESTED), he shall receive the CROWN OF LIFE, which the Lord has promised to them that love him”.

* TESTING: TRUE FAITH IS TESTED UNTIL IT IS PERFECTED

GENESIS 22:1 – “And it came to pass after these things, THAT GOD DID TEMPT (TEST) ABRAHAM, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, BEHOLD, HERE I AM”.

“THAT GOD DID TEMPT (TEST) ABRAHAM” – THIS WAS NOT SO MUCH A TEST TO PRODUCE FAITH, AS IT WAS TO REVEAL FAITH.

THIS IS THE FIRST OCCURANCE OF THE ENGLISH WORD “TEMPT” – THAT IS FOUND IN THE BIBLE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN TO BE “TEMPTED TO DO EVIL” (JAMES 1: 13) AND IS USUALLY LATER TRANSLATED AS “PROVE”.

Although God knew what Abraham would do, it must be “PROVED” to all, including even Abraham himself, that he loved God more than anyone else and that his faith in God’s Word was absolute. Such action would demonstrate the validity of God’s selection of him as the father of the chosen nation of Israel.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:11 – “Now all these things happening to them for ENSAMPLES (EXAMPLES): and THEY ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, upon WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD (AGE) ARE COME”.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:12 – “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 – “There has no TEMPTATION (TEST) taken you but such as is common to man but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it”.

“BEHOLD, HERE I AM” – Abraham’s quick answer to the call of God is a wonderful

example of how the men and women of faith should respond to God. When Abraham said, “HERE I AM”, it meant that he was ready to be taught, ready to obey, ready to surrender, and he was ready to be examined by God.

GENESIS 22:2 – “And He said, take down thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Mariah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”.

Abraham had waited until he was 100 years old to have a son (Isaac) with Sarah, and it was truly a miracle from God. God had also previously told Abraham to drive away his only other son, Ishmael. **ABRAHAM HAD GROWN TO LOVE ISAAC SO MUCH THAT HE RISKED LOVING THE GIFT (ISAAC) – MORE THAN THE GIVER OF THE GIFT (GOD)!**

* THE TORMENT THAT ABRAHAM MUST HAVE FELT FROM THIS TEST FROM GOD, FORESHADOWED THE PAIN THAT GOD THE FATHER, WOULD FEEL AT THE GIVING OF HIS “BELOVED AND ONLY SON” (JOHN 3:16) – CHRIST JESUS – FOR ALL THE SINNERS IN THE WORLD – LIKE YOU AND ME!

Although, God’s love runs throughout the Bible, this is the first time the word “LOVE” appears in the Bible, in GENESIS 22: 2. Just as Abraham loved Isaac, God the Father, spoke from the heavens and called Jesus, His “BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased” (MARK 1:11; LUKE 3:22; MATTHEW 3:17).

* RESPONSIVENESS: TRUE FAITH RESPONDS TO GOD’S CALLING WITHOUT DELAY

GENESIS 22:3 – “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went to the place of which God had told him”.

ABRAHAM RESPONDED PROMPTLY TO GOD’S ULTIMATE TEST OF FAITH

Abraham showed that he had become strong in his faith by promptly responding to God’s calling. Abraham took Isaac, the very day after, God gave him this test. In fact, “He rose early in the next morning” further means that he slept soundly in the face of his frightening test. His early departure further means that he did not delay by pleading with God or by looking for an alternative way to satisfy God’s final test of faith. Abraham also had acted promptly to God’s calling on other occasions. For example, he circumcised all the men in his household on the very same day, as God had said to him GENESIS 17:23. His regular promptness in responding to God shows that he was a man of true faith.

When one disciple asked Jesus, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father”, Jesus responded by saying: “Follow me and allow the dead to bury their own dead (MATTHEW 8:21-23). If you’re longing for your old life, Jesus warns you that you are not ready for His kingdom. Christ Jesus said this: “No man, having put his hand to the plow and LOOKING BACK, is fit for the kingdom of God (LUKE 9:62).

God does not want you to wait for a convenient time before you serve him. He has always given every believer “Talents”, that are used that are to be used for His kingdom (MATTHEW 25:14-30). If you have been given gifts like teaching, preaching, hospitality, or prayer, He wants you to use these “Talents”, without delay, for His kingdom!