

GENESIS 21 PT2

LAST WEEK WE SAW GOD KEEP HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH.

WE SAW ABRAHAM AT 100 YEARS OLD AND SARAH AT 90 GIVE BIRTH TO THEIR FIRST CHILD.

THIS WAS THE FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY AND A PROMISE MADE BY GOD.

WE SAW ABRAHAM SEND AWAY HAGAR AND ISHMAEL AT THE REQUEST OF HIS WIFE.

WE SAW 2 TYPES OF LAUGHTER.

THE JOYOUS LAUGHTER OF SARAH AND THE MOCKING SCORNFUL LAUGHTER OF ISHMAEL.

WE ALSO SAW GOD MAKE A PROMISE TO HAGAR THAT HE WOULD PROTECT HER AND HER SON AND FROM HER SON WOULD COME A MIGHTY NATION.

WE TALKED ABOUT THE FACT THAT, THAT NATION WOULD BE THE ARAB NATION AND FROM THAT NATION WOULD EVENTUALLY COME THE NATION OF ISLAM.

TONIGHT, WE WILL SEE A SECOND ENCOUNTER BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH.

ONLY THIS TIME ABRAHAM WON'T BE LYING TO ABIMELECH.

WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME THESE TWO MEN MET?

DOES ANYONE REMEMBER?

ABRAHAM LIED FOR THE SECOND TIME ABOUT SARAH BEING HIS SISTER.

THE LORD CAME TO ABIMELECH AND WARNED HIM IF HE DID NOT RETURN SARAH UNTOUCHED THAT HE WOULD WREAK HAVOC ON HIM AND HIS HOUSEHOLD EVEN HIS ENTIRE NATION.

TONIGHT, WE HAVE A MUCH DIFFERENT INTERACTION BETWEEN THESE TWO MEN.

GENESIS 21:22

22 NOW IT HAPPENED AT THAT TIME, THAT ABIMELECH AND PHICOL, THE COMMANDER OF HIS ARMY, SPOKE TO ABRAHAM, SAYING, "GOD IS WITH YOU IN ALL THAT YOU DO;

GOD IS WITH YOU...

WHAT A PROFOUND STATEMENT COMING FROM THE MOUTH OF A PAGAN KING.

TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE HAND OF GOD WAS UPON ABRAHAM.

WE WILL HEAR THESE SAME WORDS SPOKEN TO ABRAHAM'S SON ISAAC, HIS GRANDSON JACOB AND HIS GREAT GRANDSON JOSEPH.

WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE SEE.

THIS SHOWS THAT WHEN A GODLY MAN LEADS HIS FAMILY WELL NOT ONLY WILL HIS CHILDREN FOLLOW BUT MANY GENERATIONS WILL FOLLOW.

THE PEOPLE YOU WILL HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT ON IN YOUR LIFE WILL BE YOUR CHILDREN.

HOW YOU TREAT THEM AND HOW YOU CONDUCT YOURSELF IN FRONT OF THEM WILL BE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL THING IN THEIR ENTIRE LIFE UNTIL THEIR SPOUSE COMES ALONG.

BUT HOW YOU RAISE THEM WILL DETERMINE THE CRITERIA BY WHICH THEY WILL CHOOSE THEIR SPOUSE.

WHEN ABIMELECH SAYS "GOD IS WITH YOU IN ALL THAT YOU DO" SHOWS THAT HE SEES SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL IN ABRAHAM.

HE HAS SEEN THE LORD SPEAK TO HIMSELF ON BEHALF OF ABRAHAM.

IN THAT HE SAW THE LORD PROTECT SARAH.

HE HAS WITNESSED ABRAHAM PROSPER IN THE LAND IN WHICH HE DWELT.

ABIMELECH WAS KING OF THE PHILISTINES...

DOES ANYONE IN HERE REMEMBER A FAMOUS PHILISTINE?

MAYBE ONE THE MOST FAMOUS PAGANS IN ALL THE BIBLE...

GOLIATH.

OF COURSE, HE WON'T COME ALONG FOR A FEW HUNDRED MORE YEARS AND BY THAT TIME THE COVENANT THAT ABIMELECH AND ABRAHAM CUT WILL BE LONG FORGOTTEN.

BUT THE STATEMENT ABIMELECH MAKES SPEAKS TO WHO ABRAHAM IS AS A MAN, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY AS A MAN OF FAITH.

ABRAHAM DIDN'T HAVE A NEON SIGN OVER HIS HEAD PROCLAIMING GOD WAS WITH HIM.

ABIMELECH SAW THIS BY THE WAY ABRAHAM CONDUCTED HIMSELF AS WELL AS HOW GOD BLESSED HIM.

THE REASON I BRING THIS TO YOUR ATTENTION IS BECAUSE THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THAT STATEMENT "GOD IS WITH YOU"

THAT GOES FAR BEYOND JUST ABRAHAM.

WHICH LEADS ME TO A QUESTION.

DO THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW YOU THINK TO THEMSELVES "GOD IS WITH THEM"

IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING A PRETENTIOUS SELF RIGHTEOUS BIBLE THUMPER.

IT'S ABOUT LIVING A LIFE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND WHAT HE HAS CALLED YOU TO DO.

IF YOU PURSUE HIS WILL PEOPLE WILL SEE THAT HE IS WITH YOU.

NOT BECAUSE OF YOU BUT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE DOES IN YOU AND THROUGH YOU.

GENESIS 21:23

23 SO NOW, SWEAR TO ME HERE BY GOD THAT YOU WILL NOT DEAL FALSELY WITH ME OR WITH MY OFFSPRING OR WITH MY POSTERITY, BUT ACCORDING TO THE LOVINGKINDNESS THAT I HAVE SHOWN YOU, YOU SHALL SHOW ME AND THE LAND IN WHICH YOU HAVE SOJOURNED."

ABIMELECH IS ASKING FOR THERE TO BE PEACE BETWEEN THEM AND EVEN THEIR CHILDREN.

HE HAS SEEN THE FAVOR OF THE LORD UPON ABRAHAM AND HE DOESN'T WANT TO CROSS HIM.

SO, HE DESIRES TO MAKE A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, A PEACE COVENANT THAT FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES WOULD BENEFIT THEM AND THEIR OFFSPRING.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HIS TRUE MOTIVATION BEHIND THIS IS?

WHILE WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING IN THIS SECTION THAT TELLS US THERE IS ANOTHER ENCOUNTER THAT HAPPENS YEARS LATER THAT CAN GIVE US SOME INSIGHT.

GENESIS 26:26-29

26 NOW ABIMELECH CAME TO HIM FROM GERAR ^[E]WITH HIS ADVISER AHUZZATH AND PHICOL THE COMMANDER OF HIS ARMY. 27 AND ISAAC SAID TO THEM, “WHY HAVE YOU COME TO ME, SINCE YOU HATE ME AND HAVE SENT ME AWAY FROM YOU?” 28 THEN THEY SAID, “WE SEE PLAINLY THAT YAHWEH HAS BEEN WITH YOU; SO WE SAID, ‘LET THERE NOW BE AN OATH BETWEEN US—BETWEEN ^[Q]YOU AND US—AND LET US CUT A COVENANT WITH YOU, 29 THAT YOU WILL DO US NO HARM, JUST AS WE HAVE NOT TOUCHED YOU ^[R]AND HAVE DONE TO YOU NOTHING BUT GOOD AND HAVE SENT YOU AWAY IN PEACE. YOU ARE NOW THE BLESSED OF YAHWEH.’”

I THINK THE EXACT SAME THING HAPPENED WITH ABRAHAM.

ABIMELECH RECOGNIZED HE WAS BLESSED BY GOD AND DIDN'T WANT ANY BAD BLOOD BETWEEN THEM.

I SEE IT AS AN ACT OF SELF-PRESERVATION.

GENESIS 21:24-26

24 AND ABRAHAM SAID, “I SWEAR IT.” 25 BUT ABRAHAM REPROVED ABIMELECH ABOUT THE WELL OF WATER WHICH THE SERVANTS OF ABIMELECH HAD SEIZED. 26 AND ABIMELECH SAID, “I DO NOT KNOW WHO HAS DONE THIS THING; YOU DID NOT TELL ME, NOR DID I HEAR OF IT ^[U]UNTIL TODAY.”

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT ABRAHAM IS SAYING HERE?

HE IS SAYING THAT ABIMELECH'S PEOPLE CAME AND TOOK HIS WELL BY FORCE.

WHICH WAS IN THE LAND THAT HE WAS TOLD BY ABIMELECH HE COULD HAVE

GENESIS 20: 15

15 AND ABIMELECH SAID, “BEHOLD, MY LAND IS BEFORE YOU; ^[V]SETTLE WHEREVER IT IS GOOD IN YOUR SIGHT.”

SO THE SERVANTS OF ABIMELECH THAT TOOK CONTROL OF THE WELL IN THE LAND WHERE ABRAHAM WAS, WHICH VIOLATED WHAT

ABIMELECH HAD TOLD ABRAHAM AND ABRAHAM MADE SURE TO LET HIM KNOW THAT.

WHICH IS JUST AN EXAMPLE OF HOW UNGODLY PEOPLE CONDUCT THEMSELVES.

THEY HAVE NO TRUE MORAL COMPASS BY WHICH TO STEER THEIR LIFE.

IF THEY DON'T HAVE FAITH IN THE LORD, THEY WILL NOT FEAR THE LORD AND THEREFORE THEY WILL DO THINGS THAT GO AGAINST THE COMMANDMENTS GOD HAS GIVEN.

COVETOUSNESS LEADS TO STEALING AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED IN THIS INSTANCE.

THEY WANTED WHAT ABRAHAM HAD, THEY DIDN'T KNOW OR FEAR GOD OR THE REPERCUSSIONS FOR TAKING WHAT WASN'T THEIRS SO THEY TOOK IT.

ABIMELECH CLAIMS HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THESE EVENTS.

HE SAYS TO ABRAHAM I HAD NO IDEA THIS HAPPENED BECAUSE YOU NEVER TOLD ME.

GENESIS 21:27-30

27 SO ABRAHAM TOOK SHEEP AND OXEN AND GAVE THEM TO ABIMELECH, AND THE TWO OF THEM CUT A COVENANT. 28 THEN ABRAHAM SET SEVEN EWE LAMBS OF THE FLOCK BY THEMSELVES. 29 AND ABIMELECH SAID TO ABRAHAM, "WHAT DO THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS MEAN, WHICH YOU HAVE SET BY THEMSELVES?" 30 HE SAID, "YOU SHALL TAKE THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS FROM MY HAND SO THAT IT MAY BE A WITNESS TO ME, THAT I DUG THIS WELL."

THIS WAS THE CUSTOM OF THE DAY, ANIMALS WOULD BE EXCHANGED AND AGREEMENTS WOULD BE MADE.

ABRAHAM OFFERS 7 LAMBS TO ABIMELECH AND WHEN ABIMELECH ACCEPTS THEM HE IS SAYING HE IS IN AGREEMENT WITH WHAT ABRAHAM HAS PROPOSED.

ALSO, BY ACCEPTING THE LAMBS HE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT ABRAHAM IS THE ONE THAT DUG THE WELL AND THEREFORE RIGHTFUL OWNER.

FRESH WATER WAS A RARE AND VALUABLE COMMODITY DURING THIS TIME.

WATER IS WHAT SUSTAINS LIFE.

IT SUSTAINS PEOPLE, ANIMALS AND CROPS AND WITHOUT FRESH WATER EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE WOULD DIE.

SO IT'S NOT UNUSUAL THAT THIS WELL THAT ABRAHAM HAD DUG WAS TAKEN OVER THE PHILISTINES.

BUT ABIMELECH MAKES IT RIGHT.

GENESIS 21:31-34

³¹ THEREFORE HE CALLED THAT PLACE BEERSHEBA, BECAUSE THERE THE TWO OF THEM SWORE AN OATH. ³² SO THEY CUT A COVENANT AT BEERSHEBA; AND ABIMELECH AND PHICOL, THE COMMANDER OF HIS ARMY, AROSE AND RETURNED TO THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES. ³³ AND ABRAHAM PLANTED A TAMARISK TREE AT BEERSHEBA, AND THERE HE CALLED UPON THE NAME OF YAHWEH, THE EVERLASTING GOD. ³⁴ AND ABRAHAM SOJOURNED IN THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES FOR MANY DAYS.

WHY DID HE NAME IT BEERSHEBA?

IT DOESN'T TELL US DOES IT?

WELL ACTUALLY THE HEBREW DOES TELL US!

BEERSHEBA MEANS WELL OF SEVEN.

SO THEY CAME TO A PEACEFUL AGREEMENT, ABIMELECH AND HIS COMMANDER RETURNED HOME AND ABRAHAM WORSHIPED HIS GOD.

KEEP IN MIND THE PHILISTINES WERE A VERY BAD PAGAN NATION.

THEY HAD ALREADY TAKEN ABRAHAM'S WELL, THE KING HAD BEEN LIED TO BY ABRAHAM AND DECEIVED BY HE AND SARAH.

BUT GOD PROTECTED THEM IN ALL OF THIS.

ABRAHAM'S RESPONSE TO THIS INTERACTION WAS TO WORSHIP THE LORD.

WE SHOULD ALWAYS BE QUICK TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN GOD HAS DONE SOMETHING GOOD IN OUR LIVES.

WE SHOULD TAKE WHAT ABRAHAM DID TO HEART AND HAVE THE SAME ATTITUDE.

ALL TOO OFTEN WE PRAY FOR THINGS AND WHEN THOSE PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED WE FORGET TO GIVE GOD THE GLORY AND PRAISE HE DESERVES.

GENESIS 22

ABRAHAM'S GREATEST TEST

GENESIS 22 JUST SO HAPPENS TO BE ONE OF IF NOT THE MOST KNOWN STORY ABOUT ABRAHAM.

A FEW WEEKS AGO WE SAW GOD FULFILL HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH IN THE FORM OF A SON.

ISAAC.

TONIGHT, WE WILL SEE GOD CALL ABRAHAM TO SACRIFICE HIS BELOVED PROMISED SON.

THIS POINTS TO HOW GOD THE FATHER WOULD ONE DAY SACRIFICE HIS SON JESUS FOR US.

AND JUST AS GOD PROVIDES THE SACRIFICE FOR ABRAHAM ON THIS DAY HE PROVIDED THE SACRIFICE FOR EVERYONE WHO WOULD EVER BELIEVE IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST THE MESSIAH.

AND WHEN YOU REALLY THINK ABOUT IT GOD NOT ONLY PROVIDED THE LAMB FOR ABRAHAM, HE NOT ONLY PROVIDED JESUS FOR US, BUT HE PROVIDES EVERYTHING WE HAVE.

IT IS BECAUSE OF GOD THAT WE HAVE HOMES TO LIVE IN.

IT IS BECAUSE OF GOD THAT WE HAVE FOOD TO EAT.

IT IS BECAUSE OF GOD THAT WE HAVE A CHURCH FAMILY THAT LOVES AND CARES FOR US.

EVERYTHING THAT WE HAVE, EVERYTHING THAT IS GOOD IN OUR LIVES IS BECAUSE THE SOVEREIGN GOD OF THE UNIVERSE SAW FIT TO PROVIDE IT FOR US.

GENESIS 22:1

NOW IT HAPPENED AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT GOD TESTED ABRAHAM AND SAID TO HIM, "ABRAHAM!" AND HE SAID, "HERE I AM."

CHAPTER 22 STARTS OUT BY SAYING AFTER THESE THINGS.

THIS IS FOR CHRONOLOGY SAKES.

THIS TELLS US THAT WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO READ HAPPENED AFTER HAGAR AND ISHMAEL DEPART AND AFTER ABRAHAM CUTS A COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH.

THE WORD TELLS US THAT GOD TESTED ABRAHAM.

THIS IS SO THE READER UNDERSTANDS THAT WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT TO READ IS A TEST.

KEEP IN MIND THAT GOD KNEW THAT HE WAS GOING TO PUT ABRAHAM'S FAITH TO THE TEST IN THIS WAY BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS EVEN BORN.

NONE OF THIS WAS A LAST-MINUTE IDEA, THIS WAS THE PLAN ALL ALONG.

EVERY TEST OF FAITH THAT ABRAHAM EXPERIENCED IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE WAS LEADING UP TO THIS POINT.

WE MAY NOT BE ALL BE CALLED TO SUCH A GREAT TEST OF FAITH BUT EVERY SINGLE PERSON THAT HAS BEEN AND EVER WILL BE A CHRISTIAN WILL BE TESTED.

SO LET'S BRIEFLY TALK ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING TESTED AND BEING TEMPTED....

DOES ANYONE KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TEST AND A TEMPTATION?

A TEST COMES FROM AN OUTSIDE SOURCE WHILE TEMPTATION COMES FROM WITHIN US...

JAMES 1:13-15

13 LET NO ONE SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, "I AM BEING TEMPTED ^[U]BY GOD"; FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED ^[K]BY EVIL, AND HE HIMSELF DOES NOT TEMPT ANYONE. 14 BUT EACH ONE IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS CARRIED AWAY AND ENTICED BY HIS OWN LUST. 15 THEN WHEN LUST HAS CONCEIVED, IT GIVES BIRTH TO SIN, AND WHEN SIN IS FULLY MATURED, IT BRINGS FORTH DEATH.

GOD WILL NEVER TEMPT YOU TO DO ANYTHING THAT IS SIN.

TEMPTATION IS BORN IN OUR EVIL LITTLE HEARTS.

GOD WILL ALLOW YOU TO BE TESTED, HE WILL ALLOW SATAN TO TEST YOU JUST AS HE DID JESUS.

BUT TEMPTATION COMES FROM WITHIN US.

IT'S IMPORTANT WE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO.

TONIGHT WE WILL SEE ABRAHAM BEING PUT TO THE TEST AND NOT BY SATAN BUT BY GOD.

GOD CAN TEST OUR FAITH BUT IT WILL NEVER BE WITH SIN.

IT CAN BE THROUGH TRIBULATION; IT CAN BE THROUGH CALLING US TO SACRIFICE SOMETHING BUT HE WILL NEVER TEST US WITH SIN.

AND EVEN THOUGH TEMPTATION COMES FROM WITHIN HE STILL PROVIDES US A WAY OUT EVERY TIME.

1ST CORINTHIANS 10:13

NO TEMPTATION HAS OVERTAKEN YOU BUT SUCH AS IS COMMON TO MAN, BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO BE TEMPTED BEYOND WHAT YOU ARE ABLE, BUT WITH THE TEMPTATION WILL PROVIDE THE WAY OF ESCAPE ALSO, SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ENDURE IT.

BUT TEMPTATION ISN'T THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE LESSON TONIGHT BUT RATHER TONIGHT IS ABOUT BEING TESTED.

SO IN GENESIS 22:1 WE SEE THE LORD CALL UPON ABRAHAM AND ABRAHAM RESPONDS WITH "HERE I AM"

ALMOST AS IF SAYING "HERE I AM LORD READY TO DO WHATEVER IT IS YOU NEED ME TO DO."

GENESIS 22:2,3

² THEN HE SAID, "TAKE NOW YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY ONE, WHOM YOU LOVE, ISAAC, AND GO FORTH TO THE LAND OF MORIAH, AND OFFER HIM THERE AS A BURNT OFFERING ON ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS OF WHICH I WILL TELL YOU."³ SO ABRAHAM ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING AND SADDLED HIS DONKEY AND TOOK TWO OF HIS YOUNG MEN WITH HIM AND ISAAC HIS SON; AND HE SPLIT WOOD FOR THE BURNT OFFERING AND AROSE AND WENT TO THE PLACE OF WHICH GOD HAD TOLD HIM.

HERE IT IS, THE MOMENT THAT HAS BEEN COMING FOR ABRAHAM HIS ENTIRE LIFE.

HE HAD NO IDEA THAT GOD WAS GOING TO CALL HIM TO THIS.

VERY SIMILAR TO WHEN GOD FIRST CALLS HIM OUT OF HARAN, HE DOESN'T TELL HIM WHERE HE'S GOING, HE JUST TELLS HIM TO HEAD IN A GENERAL DIRECTION.

AND JUST LIKE WHEN GOD FIRST CALLS HIM, WE SEE NO HESITATION.

THERE IS NO PLEADING WITH GOD, NO BEGGING FOR GOD TO SPARE HIS PRECIOUS SON.

I DON'T KNOW IF I COULD DO THIS.

I CAN SEE MYSELF BEGGING TO PLEASE TAKE ME INSTEAD OF HAVING TO GIVE MY SON UP, I COULD SEE MYSELF ASKING GOD "IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY LORD"

GOD SAYS TAKE NOW YOUR SON YOUR ONLY SON....

WAIT A MINUTE THOUGH ABRAHAM HAD ANOTHER SON RIGHT?

ISHMAEL....

THIS TELLS US THAT GOD DID NOT RECOGNIZE ISHMAEL AS ABRAHAM'S SON IN THE SAME WAY HE RECOGNIZED ISAAC.

ISAAC WAS THE PROMISED ONE, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF ABRAHAM.

THE ONE THROUGH WHICH THE PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM WOULD BE FULFILLED.

THIS ALSO POINTS TO A FUTURE EVENT DOES IT NOT?

WHO ELSE WAS AN ONLY SON?

JESUS!

GENESIS 22:3

3 SO ABRAHAM ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING AND SADDLED HIS DONKEY AND TOOK TWO OF HIS YOUNG MEN WITH HIM AND ISAAC HIS SON; AND HE SPLIT WOOD FOR THE BURNT OFFERING AND AROSE AND WENT TO THE PLACE OF WHICH GOD HAD TOLD HIM.

I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO IMAGINE WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH ABRAHAM'S MIND AS WAS CHOPPING THE WOOD THAT WOULD BE USED TO BURN THE BODY OF HIS SON.

THIS IS A WEIGHTY MOMENT FOR ABRAHAM.

BUT STILL NO HESITATION, WE SEE NO SIGN OF DOUBT WHATSOEVER.

WE SEE A MAN FILLED WITH FAITH, A MAN THAT KNEW ISAAC WAS THE PROMISED SON.

ABRAHAM KNEW THAT EVEN IF HE DID END UP ULTIMATELY HAVING TO SACRIFICE ISAAC THAT THE GOD HE SERVED WAS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE.

HEBREWS 11:17-19

17 BY FAITH ABRAHAM, WHEN HE WAS TESTED, OFFERED UP ISAAC, AND HE WHO HAD RECEIVED THE PROMISES WAS OFFERING UP HIS ONLY SON, 18 TO WHOM IT WAS SAID, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED." 19 [o] HE CONSIDERED THAT GOD IS ABLE TO RAISE PEOPLE EVEN FROM THE DEAD, FROM WHICH, [e] FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING, HE ALSO RECEIVED HIM BACK.

I THINK THAT'S WHY WE SEE HIM SO WILLINGLY DOING EXACTLY WHAT GOD WAS CALLING HIM TO.

BECAUSE HE BELIEVED GOD, HE KNEW THAT IT WOULD BE THROUGH ISAAC THAT THE PROMISES OF THE LORD WOULD BE KEPT SO WITH NO DOUBT IN HIS MIND HE DOES EXACTLY WHAT THE LORD COMMANDED HIM TO DO.

GENESIS 22:4-6

4 ON THE THIRD DAY ABRAHAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND SAW THE PLACE FROM A DISTANCE. 5 AND ABRAHAM SAID TO HIS YOUNG MEN, "STAY HERE WITH THE DONKEY WHILE I AND THE BOY GO OVER THERE; AND WE WILL WORSHIP, AND WE WILL RETURN TO YOU." 6 THEN ABRAHAM TOOK THE WOOD OF THE BURNT OFFERING AND PUT IT ON ISAAC HIS SON, AND HE TOOK IN HIS HAND THE FIRE AND THE KNIFE. SO THE TWO OF THEM WALKED ON TOGETHER.

I WANT US TO PUT OURSELVES IN ABRAHAM'S POSITION...

FOR THREE DAYS HE HAS TRAVELED WITH ONE THOUGHT ON HIS MIND.

KNOWING THAT HE WOULD REACH A POINT WHERE GOD SAID YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE AND HE WOULD HAVE TO SACRIFICE HIS SON.

WE ARE NOT SURE EXACTLY HOW OLD ISAAC IS AT THIS POINT BUT HE IS OLD ENOUGH TO CARRY THE WOOD THAT WAS GOING TO BE USED TO BURN HIS BODY.

HE WAS ALSO OLD ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT THERE WAS NO LAMB FOR THE SACRIFICE AS WE WILL SEE IN THE NEXT FEW VERSES.

THERE ARE SO MANY PARALLELS TO THIS STORY AND THE STORY OF JESUS'S CRUCIFIXION.

DOES ANYONE NOTICE ANY SIMILARITIES OR SOMETHING THAT IS SIGNIFICANT IN THESE VERSES AS WELL AS WHAT HAPPENED WITH JESUS?

HE WAITED THREE DAYS!

ISAAC CARRIED THE WOOD THAT WOULD BE USED AS TO BURN HIS SACRIFICED BODY JUST AS JESUS BORE THE CROSS.

THESE LITTLE DETAILS MATTER.

DOES ANYONE KNOW HOW LONG IT WILL BE FROM THIS POINT IN TIME UNTIL JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS?

APPROXIMATELY 2000 YEARS!

YET WE SEE SO MANY THINGS THAT ARE SO FAMILIAR BETWEEN THESE TWO STORIES AS WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE.

GENESIS 22:7,8

7 THEN 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?" 8 AND ABRAHAM SAID, "GOD WILL ^[A]PROVIDE FOR HIMSELF THE LAMB FOR THE BURNT OFFERING, MY SON." SO THE TWO OF THEM WALKED ON TOGETHER.

LIKE I SAID ISAAC WAS OLD ENOUGH TO REALIZE THEY HAD NO LAMB FOR THE SACRIFICE.

HE POSES THE QUESTION TO HIS FATHER AND HIS FATHER'S RESPONSE IS BEAUTIFUL, AS WELL PROPHETIC IN TWO WAYS.

DOES ANYONE KNOW THE WAYS ABRAHAM'S STATEMENT " ***"GOD WILL ^[A]PROVIDE FOR HIMSELF THE LAMB"*** WERE PROPHETIC?

THE FIRST WAY IS THAT GOD DOES THAT VERY DAY PROVIDE THE SACRIFICE.

WHEN ABRAHAM FAITHFULLY DOES WHAT GOD CALLS HIM TO DO HE WILL BE STOPPED, HE AND HIS SON WILL LOOK UP AND THERE WILL BE A RAM TANGLED IN THE BRIARS.

THE SECOND WAY THIS STATEMENT WAS PROPHETIC WAS THE SENSE IN WHICH THE LORD PROVIDED THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE FORM OF HIS SON.

THE ONE MAN WHO DIED SO THAT WE MAY ALL LIVE.

IT WAS THE FATHERS PLAN ALL ALONG TO SEND JESUS TO THE CROSS.

JUST LIKE IT WAS GOD'S PLAN ALL ALONG TO CALL ABRAHAM TO THIS TEST OF FAITH.

AND JUST AS ABRAHAM WAS WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIS SON AND JUST AS HIS SON WILLINGLY FOLLOWED HIM TO HIS SLAUGHTER JESUS WILLINGLY WENT TO THE CROSS FOR US.

GENESIS 22:9, 10

⁹ THEN THEY CAME TO THE PLACE OF WHICH GOD HAD TOLD HIM; AND ABRAHAM BUILT THE ALTAR THERE AND ARRANGED THE WOOD AND BOUND HIS SON ISAAC AND PUT HIM ON THE ALTAR, ON TOP OF THE WOOD. ¹⁰ AND ABRAHAM STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND AND TOOK THE KNIFE TO SLAY HIS SON.

ABRAHAM NEVER ONCE SHOWS ANY SIGN OF HESITATION.

AS HIS FAITH IS BEING PUT TO THE ULTIMATE TEST HE NEVER WAIVERS.

ONE THING THAT ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS INTERESTING IS THAT WE HEAR NOTHING FROM ISAAC DURING THIS ENCOUNTER.

HIS FATHER TIES HIM UP, PLACES HIM ON THE ALTAR WHICH THEY HAD BUILT AND PUT WOOD AROUND SO THEY COULD BURN IT AND THEN HE LITERALLY RAISES HIS HAND WITH A KNIFE IN IT ABOVE HIS SON AND WE GET NOTHING!

MAYBE THE LORD PUT ISAAC TO SLEEP, MAYBE ISAAC WAS AWAKE AND COMPLETELY LOSING HIS MIND, WE HAVE NO IDEA.

GENESIS 22:11

¹¹ BUT THE ANGEL OF YAHWEH CALLED TO HIM FROM HEAVEN AND SAID, "ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM!" AND HE SAID, "HERE I AM."

FOR A SECOND TIME WE SEE ABRAHAM SAY TO THE LORD "HERE I AM"

THIS IS NOT BECAUSE THE LORD CAN'T SEE HIM OR CAN'T FIND HIM.

THIS IS ABRAHAM'S WAY OF SAYING "HERE I AM LORD COMMAND ME TO DO AS YOU WISH."

THIS IS HIS WAY OF SHOWING OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

HE IS PLEDGING HIS WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW WHATEVER THE LORD COMMANDS HIM TO DO.

GENESIS 22:12

12 AND HE SAID, "DO NOT STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND AGAINST THE BOY, AND DO NOTHING TO HIM; FOR NOW I KNOW THAT YOU ^[B]FEAR GOD, SINCE YOU HAVE NOT WITHHELD YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY ONE, FROM ME."

WHEN I READ THIS, I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK ABOUT WHAT JESUS SAID IN LUKE 14....

LUKE 14:26

26 "IF ANYONE COMES TO ME, AND DOES NOT ^[H]HATE HIS OWN FATHER AND MOTHER AND WIFE AND CHILDREN AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS, YES, AND EVEN HIS OWN LIFE, HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE.

IN ORDER TO BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST OR IN ABRAHAM'S CASE A SERVANT OF THE ONE TRUE GOD WE MUST HOLD NOT ANYONE OR ANYTHING ABOVE GOD.

BY CALLING ABRAHAM TO SACRIFICE ISAAC, GOD WAS TESTING HIM.

HE WAS TESTING HIS FAITH.

WE KNOW THIS TO BE THE CASE BECAUSE OF WHAT THE OPENING OF THIS CHAPTER SAYS.

GENESIS 22:1

NOW IT HAPPENED AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT GOD TESTED ABRAHAM AND SAID TO HIM, "ABRAHAM!" AND HE SAID, "HERE I AM."

DID GOD TEST ABRAHAM SO THAT ABRAHAM COULD PROVE HIS FAITH TO GOD?

OF COURSE NOT!

ABRAHAM'S FAITH JUST LIKE OURS IS A GIFT FROM GOD, THE LORD IS WELL AWARE OF OUR FAITH AND WHETHER OR NOT WE WILL PASS OR FAIL THE TESTS HE SETS BEFORE US.

THE TESTING OF OUR FAITH IS TO SHOW US HOW STRONG IT IS.

TO SHOW US THAT IN A TIME THAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO SOMETHING WE THINK IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US, THE FAITH THAT GOD SO GRACIOUSLY PROVIDES US WILL GIVE US THE STRENGTH NECESSARY TO PASS THE TEST.

GENESIS 22:13, 14

13 THEN ABRAHAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND SAW, AND BEHOLD, THERE WAS A RAM AFTER IT HAD BEEN CAUGHT IN THE THICKET BY ITS HORNS; AND ABRAHAM WENT AND TOOK THE RAM AND OFFERED IT UP FOR A BURNT OFFERING IN THE PLACE OF HIS SON. 14 AND ABRAHAM CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE [c]YAHWEH WILL PROVIDE, AS IT IS SAID THIS DAY, "IN THE MOUNT OF YAHWEH IT WILL [d]BE PROVIDED."

JUST AS ABRAHAM HAD TOLD HIS SON THAT THE LORD WOULD PROVIDE THE SACRIFICE HE DID.

THE LORD THEN MAKES A VERY FAMILIAR PROMISE TO ABRAHAM ONE THAT HE HAS ALREADY MADE SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE.

GOD DIDN'T DELAY THIS PROMISE UNTIL NOW BECAUSE HE COULD SEE THIS EVENT FROM THE BEGINNING.

HE ALWAYS KNEW THAT WHEN THE TIME CAME THAT ABRAHAM WOULD DO EXACTLY AS HE WAS COMMANDED TO DO.

THIS WAS NOT A NEW PROMISE BUT RATHER A REITERATION OF HIS ORIGINAL PROMISE.

REMEMBER GOD CAN SEE PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE EVENTS ALL AT THE SAME TIME.

HE EXISTS COMPLETELY OUTSIDE OF TIME AND IS NOT BOUND BY TIME IN ANYWAY SHAPE OR FORM.

AND JUST LIKE HE COULD SEE THIS DAY WITH ABRAHAM FROM THE BEGINNING HE CAN SEE THE GREAT TESTS OF FAITH THAT AWAIT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US.

THAT SHOULD BRING US GREAT COMFORT, KNOWING THAT WHETHER WE PASS OR FAIL THESE TESTS HE ALREADY KNOWS AND HAS ALREADY PROVIDED A WAY FOR US TO BE REWARDED IF WE SUCCEED AND TO BE FORGIVEN IF WE FAIL.

GENESIS 22:15-19

15 THEN THE ANGEL OF YAHWEH CALLED TO ABRAHAM A SECOND TIME FROM HEAVEN,¹⁶ AND SAID, "BY MYSELF I HAVE SWORN, DECLARES YAHWEH, BECAUSE YOU HAVE DONE THIS THING AND HAVE NOT SPARED YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY ONE, ¹⁷ 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 HIS ENEMIES. ¹⁸ IN YOUR ^[E]SEED ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH SHALL ^[E]BE BLESSED, BECAUSE YOU HAVE LISTENED TO MY VOICE." ¹⁹ SO ABRAHAM RETURNED TO HIS YOUNG MEN, AND THEY AROSE AND WALKED TOGETHER TO BEERSHEBA; AND ABRAHAM LIVED AT BEERSHEBA.

ALL I CAN SAY IS WHAT AN EMOTIONAL DAY THIS MUST'VE BEEN.

AND EVEN THOUGH NO ONE IN THIS ROOM HAS EVER BEEN CALLED TO SACRIFICE A CHILD AS TEST OF OUR FAITH, WE HAVE ALL BEEN TESTED.

AND WHAT A JOYOUS THING IT IS WHEN WE PASS THOSE TESTS.

BUT WHEN THOSE TESTS COME BECAUSE THEY WILL, AND WHEN WE DO PASS THEM WE NEED TO REMEMBER TO GIVE GOD ALL THE CREDIT.

IT BECAUSE OF HIM AND HIS WONDERFUL GIFT OF FAITH THAT WE CAN EVEN STAND A CHANCE TO PASS THE TEST.

BUT PASSING TESTS AREN'T THE ONLY WAY OUR FAITH GROWS.

IT ALSO GROWS BY SPENDING TIME IN GOD'S WORD AND IN PRAYER.

IT GROWS WHEN WE SEE PRAYERS BEING ANSWERED.

IT GROWS WHEN WE SEE A CHANGED LIFE BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN SOMEONE'S HEART.

IT GROWS WHEN WE FAIL TESTS AND SEE HOW GRACIOUS OUR FATHER TRULY IS....