

In the Beginning

Genesis 22:1-24

- Since we've been introduced to Abraham we have seen him go through many a test, from leaving everything he'd ever known and following the Lord to the promise Land, to sending his eldest son Ishmael into the desert with nothing more than a water bottle and a piece of bread and trusting that God will provide and protect him. As challenging as both of those were it is here in **Ch 22** that we will read about the greatest test Abraham ever faced.

V1-24

- If you think that at some point you will become old enough or spiritually mature enough where you are beyond faith stretching experiencing this event crushes that thought. Abraham's been enrolled in the school of faith since he was **75**, and now he's well over a **100**, and at this advanced age is where he'll face his stiffest test by far, proving that we are never too old to face new challenges, fight new battles, and learn new truths, for when we stop learning we stop growing, and when we stop growing we stop living by faith.
- **V1-2** this was not so much a test to "**produce faith**" as it was a test to "**reveal faith**" often God will put us in positions for our faith which is already there, to reveal itself to us, proving that we didn't need something more added to us, we simply needed to act upon what was already in us. Some of you might ask "**what's the difference between a test and a temptation**" its simple, a **temptation** is from Satan, designed to pull you down and destroy, a **test** is from God, designed to pull you through and to build up, one is meant to discourage while the other to encourage.
- **Jam 1:3-4** tell us why it is necessary to be tested for it says it helps us in 3 ways > **1st Endurance-** we learn to wait for God and not rely on time limits, **2nd Spiritual maturity-** produces a deeper and greater trust in God, **3rd Hope-** builds strength of character. Notice in the end it says "**you will lack nothing**" as a test is never meant to destroy only to build up. With that said scripture says concerning **tests, trials, and temptations**, that God will never put us through them without providing **proper preparation** and a **firm foundation** > **1Cor 10:13**
- For Abraham the same is true > **Gen 11:31-** at **50** he's told to leave his family and home in Ur, **Gen 12:1-** after his father dies **25yrs** later he leaves Haran on a promise from God to travel to a destination unknown, **Gen 13:9-** he must separate from his nephew Lot whom he loves dearly, **Gen 14:23-** he rejects the offer of riches from the King of Sodom, **Gen 17:19-** he believed at **99** and Sarah at **89** that God would give him a son and call him "**Isaac**" laughter, **Gen 21:14-** after being told by God to send Ishmael away into the desert he does believing God would keep him.
- Most scholars believe Isaac is a grown man at least **20** and if so that would mean God has used **70yrs** in preparing Abraham for this moment, for without the trials, tests, and temptations how can you really know for sure that you trust God, this is what gives us a firm foundation.

- This request seemed to contradict everything Abraham knows about God, as how can his legacy come through Isaac whom He promised would be his heir if he dies without having children? A burnt offering was a sacrifice that was killed before the Lord primarily to pay for man's sin, and up to this point God had never asked for a human sacrifice but an animal sacrifice. Every detail is carefully directed as God gives a specific place "**Land of Moriah**" and later a particular spot where it would happen, also in this event is where the first mention of "**love**" occurs in the bible
- **V3-6** a couple of interesting points **1st** Abraham didn't procrastinate or hesitate he simply obeyed, and got up early in the morning saddled up everything and everybody and set off to do what God commanded, **2nd** he trusted God would fulfill His promise **V5**, telling the others that he and Isaac would return, because Abraham understands the character of God he's able to obey the commands of God that he doesn't understand, he simply believed if necessary God would raise up Isaac even if he was sacrificed, this is amazing when you think about it!
- **V7-8** Isaac looks around and he sees everything needed for a proper sacrifice, the wood, a fire but where is the lamb? Abraham's answer again shows his faith and trust in the Lord, and notice he does it without causing alarm to Isaac, his answer speaks to us that sometimes we just need to focus on the promises and not the explanations, he gives him a short answer to his question.
- **V9-10** Abraham comes to the place where God wanted this to happen and so he prepares the wood, the fire and then begins to tie Isaac up, remember at this point Isaac was a grown man who could easily overpower his father but he willingly lays himself down to be offered up > **Heb 11:17-19**- Abraham not only believed what God could do but had instilled that faith into his son as well which allowed him to be obedient in the face of asking him to do the miraculous. **V11-14**- Abraham has the knife-torch both instruments of death and he lifts the knife to sacrifice his son and the Lord cries out to him twice making sure Abraham hears him.
- This shows God was not like the pagan gods worshipped by the Canaanites who demanded human sacrifice and were pleased by it and that this was all about "**love**" how although Abraham is spared from sacrificing his only son God on the other hand would not, as Jesus would be the Lamb slain on the cross. Just as God gave Abraham a new name Abraham discovers a new name of God "**Jehovah Jireh**" God will provide, and notice where God provided for his need at the place of his assignment, don't expect the provision of God if we're not in the will of God, as Abraham was at the right place, at the right time, to experience his provisions.
- **V15-18** blessings live next door to obedience, after passing the test Abraham hears the voice of Jesus declaring to him how pleased He was in him and how his descendants would be as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore and through them all nations would be blessed. **V19-24** Abraham returns with Isaac to his camp with the servants and he doesn't say a word and one reason I believe is found in **V5**, where he had described this whole event as "**worship**" he saw the test, the trial as an opportunity to worship the Lord, this is the correct perspective.

- As we close a couple of quick thoughts the Mt. where this took place was called Mt. Moriah, its where the Jews built the temple > **2Chron 3:1**, and Mt. Moriah is the place where Jesus was crucified many scholars believe, and it's here where we first see the words "**Love**" and "**Jehovah provides**". Also Isaac being a picture of Jesus is very clear in this story > **1st** how both were loved by their father's, **2nd** both offered themselves willingly, **3rd** both carried wood up the hill of their sacrifice, **4th** both sacrificed on Mt. Moriah, **5th** both delivered from death on the third day.