

Subject: A Preview of Calvary

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-14

God told Abraham to go to Mount Moriah, the same location where the temple was later built in Jerusalem (2 Chr. 3:1). This whole event was a picture of Calvary:

- The costly sacrifice of the Father

He was willing to sacrifice His one and only Son.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Romans 8:32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

- The willing sacrifice of the Son

He was willing to lay down His life in obedience to the Father.

John 10:15 *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

- The substitute sacrifice for believers

God provided the perfect substitute for us. Jehovah-jireh means “the Lord will provide.” What God required, He also provided (vs. 8). This is the theme of the Old Testament: God will provide Himself a lamb.

Isaiah 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

God used Abraham in order to provide this preview of the cross. Little did Abraham realize that God would use this experience in his life to portray the greatest event of all time, the death of Jesus on the cross.

This was a place of testing (vs. 1-2). It was a place of trusting (vs. 3-8), and a place of total obedience (vs. 9-14).

God had tested Abraham many times before, but this was the hardest test Abraham ever faced. Character is both developed and revealed by tests. You cannot avoid the tests of life, and you cannot cheat on these tests. A young boy brought home his report card with many failing grades. His mother asked him, “What do you have to say for yourself?” The boy answered, “One thing’s for sure, you know I haven’t been cheating.”

Let’s dig into this story by asking three important questions:

WHEN DID GOD TEST ABRAHAM?

God tested him all of his life. This test came when he was over 100 years old. We will be tested as long as we are in this world. God had tested Abraham many times before this.

Abraham passed “the family test” when he had to leave his loved ones to follow God.

But then he failed “the fear test” when He lied about his wife.

He passed “the fellowship test” when He gave Lot first choice on grazing land.

He passed “the fortune test” when He turned down an offer by the King of Sodom.

But then he failed “the fatherhood test” when he listened to Sarah’s suggestion about having a son by Hagar.

He failed “the fear test” again when he lied about his wife the second time.

Abraham was just like us. Some tests he passed, and some tests he failed. But all of those tests were part of God’s process in developing Abraham into a godly man.

God tells us to anticipate and appreciate the tests of life.

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (various trials); Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

God never tested Lot like He tested Abraham. When we are tested realize that God wants to accomplish something special in our life.

HOW DID GOD TEST ABRAHAM?

- God tested his love. Did he love his son more than God?
- God tested his faith. Would he trust God even if he didn’t understand?
- God tested his obedience. Would he do what God told him to do?

Abraham passed all three tests. He passed the test of love. He proved that he loved God more than anyone or anything else. Genesis 22:2 is the first time “love” is found in the Bible. Abraham had a special love for his son Isaac. God did not want Isaac’s life. He wanted Abraham’s heart.

Abraham passed the test of faith. He trusted God even though he did not understand.

He trusted God’s promise of many descendants through his son Isaac. Abraham knew that God would not lie, so he believed God’s word to him. “Never doubt in the dark what God has told you in the light.”

Genesis 22:5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

Hebrews 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Abraham passed the test of obedience. We are saved by grace through faith alone, but real faith is never alone. Real faith in God is proven by obedience to God.

***James 2:20-21** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*

Abraham obeyed God promptly and completely.

It has been said that “our faith is not really tested until God asks us to bear what seems unbearable, do what seems unreasonable, and expect what seems impossible.”

We may be tested by major changes, delayed promises, impossible problems, unanswered prayers, undeserved criticism, and even senseless tragedies, but ultimately all of these will test our love, our faith, and our obedience.

WHY DID GOD TEST ABRAHAM?

- This test was for God’s glory

Everything God does is for His glory. In times of testing it is easy to think about our needs, our burdens, and our pain, but we ought to focus on how we can glorify God in this trial.

- This test was for Abraham’s good

In school we learned the lessons and then took the test, but God works just the opposite. He teaches us as we go through the test. What did God teach Abraham? He taught him a lot about himself. But even more important, He taught him a lot about His plan of redemption.

When Abraham went up into Mount Moriah, it was as if he went to Mount Calvary and saw the death of Jesus on the cross. Abraham understood the depth of the Father’s love for His Son. He understood the perfect obedience of the Son to die for our sins. He understood that God would provide a substitute sacrifice for all men.

***John 8:56** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*