

# Lessons from the Altar of Jehovah-Jireh

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction: Gen. 22:1-19

## I. THE TEST WAS A GOOD THING

- A. Abraham was not being punished by God. He was special to God.
- B. Abraham had been obedient to God from the beginning.
  - 1. He had a comfortable life, but gave it up for God - Gen. 12:1
  - 2. He was not a young man: 75 yrs. old - Gen. 12:4
  - 3. He was a successful man: wealthy businessman - Gen. 12:5
  - 4. He left a secure, safe, urban life to go into an unknown, nomadic, rural life in a land where law was not respected as it was in Ur, Chaldea
- C. Before God called Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, he had already given up much.
  - 1. He left his home country and family
  - 2. He separated from his beloved nephew Lot.
  - 3. He gave up his son Ishmael in his youth
  - 4. Now God demands the last family Abraham had; the one family member on whom his hope for the future rested
- D. After doing everything God has asked and giving up so many things, now God is putting Abraham through a test - Gen. 22:1
  - 1. Hadn't he been through enough? Hadn't he already proven himself?
  - 2. The Adversary sends trials to destroy the faith of Christians, but God sends trials to strengthen our faith - James 1:12-17
  - 3. God does not tell us when we are being tested. He did not tell Abraham he was being tested.
    - a. All of life in our pilgrimage on earth can be considered a test.
    - b. Every trial is an opportunity to grow and glorify God -James 1:2-4
  - 4. Every test forces a decision: "Who will I accommodate, God or myself?"
  - 5. Some tests must last long in order to accomplish their purpose.
    - a. They produce endurance - James 1:3
    - b. They refine and mature character - Rom. 5:3-4
- E. God demanded the very dearest thing to Abraham's heart, his only son.
  - 1. All of the promises made to Abraham were riding on Isaac.
  - 2. The command was clear
    - a. Gen. 22:2 contains three imperative verbs: "Take now," "Go," and "Offer." It was a call to immediate action.
    - b. God repeats the personal pronoun "you/your" three times to make it clear who was to take this action.
  - 3. Before Abraham could sacrifice Isaac, he had to sacrifice his own will.
  - 4. The Adversary is satisfied with only part of one; God wants all of him

## II. ISAAC WAS INVOLVED IN THE TEST

- A. Quite often, our tests do not impact us alone, and our choices to pass or fail the test do not impact us alone.
  - 1. What would have happened to Isaac if Abraham had sacrificed him?

2. What would have happened to Isaac if Abraham had refused to sacrifice him? Which choice was in Isaac's best interest?
  3. What did happen to Isaac?
  4. What would have been the impact on all subsequent generations, including us?
  5. Do you understand that your choice to pass or fail a test will greatly impact others? What choices will be in their best interests?
  6. Often we try to protect our children from our trials, mistakenly believing that all tests of our faith will harm them.
    - a. Our children are not adversely affected by our tests; they are blessed or burdened depending on how we handle our trials.
    - b. If we handle tests in their presence with godliness and grace, our children will see an example of how to do it themselves, they will draw nearer to parents in admiration, and they will be stronger for the experience.
- B. Isaac was not a helpless infant; he was old enough that he had the choice to trust his father.
1. He could see what was coming. The journey took three days, and the preparations for the sacrifice were evident.
  2. Abraham was old and could not have forced Isaac, and Isaac was strong enough to carry all of the wood for the sacrifice - Gen. 22:6
- C. Though it meant his death, Isaac submitted to his father.
1. Isaac had received no instructions from God, but he fully submitted to his father - Gen. 18:19
- What was going through their minds?
1. We know what Abraham was thinking - Heb. 11:17-19
  2. But Isaac would have to simply trust his father.

### III. THE TEST FORESHADOWED GOD'S SACRIFICE OF JESUS

- A. Parallels between the sacrifice of Jesus and of Isaac.
1. Both Isaac and Jesus were "only begotten" sons - John 3:16
  2. Both were beloved sons - Gen. 22:2; Matt. 3:17. Incidentally, this is the first time the word "love" is used in the Bible.
  3. Both were offered by their fathers who loved them - John 3:16
  4. Both sons submitted to being sacrificed without protest
    - a. John 10:18; Luke 22:42
  5. Both were required by their fathers to carry the burden on their back.
    - a. Isaac carried the wood for the altar - Gen. 22:6
    - b. Jesus carried the wood of the cross and the sins of the world.
    - c. John 19:17; Isa. 53:6
  6. Both were sacrificed in the region of Moriah - Gen. 22:2
    - a. Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem, a city on mount Moriah - 2Chron. 2:21
  7. Both Isaac and Jesus returned to their fathers' houses after the sacrifice
    - a. Gen. 22:19; Heb. 1:3

#### **IV. ABRAHAM'S TEST IS A TYPE OF OUR TEST**

- A. As Abraham was called out from among his people to walk with God, Christians are called out of the world to walk with God.
  - 1. Ekklesia - "The called out" - 2Cor. 6:17; John 17:14-18
- B. Like Abraham, Christians are called on to leave surrender all that we have in the world that will keep us from our pilgrimage with God - Heb. 12:1
  - 1. Noah left everyone except his godly wife and children. He was saved
  - 2. Abraham left his idolatrous relatives to walk with God. He was saved
  - 3. Lot's wife could not leave some of her family and her home in Sodom. She was lost
  - 4. Israel wanted to return to Egypt when the Exodus became difficult. They were lost - Num. 14
  - 5. The key to success is to forget what we left behind - Phil. 3:13-14
  - 6. Once we have made the commitment to Christ, we must never look back - Luke 9:62
- C. As Abraham was required to sacrifice, so are we - Rom. 12:1; Luke 9:23-26
  - 1. When the demands of the word God require that we sacrifice our time and comfort on earth, He is testing us to see if we are faithful enough for heaven.
  - 2. When God requires us to sever earthly ties and follow Him, He is asking if we really want to be heirs of a home in heaven - Matt. 10:37
- D. After the time of testing, God always delivers on His promises - Mark 10:29-30
  - 1. There is no sacrifice we are called to make that is greater than that which God has already made for us.
  - 2. He is asking us to sacrifice for Him as He sacrificed for us.