

## **Abraham Offer; Isaac Part 2**

Before we begin our lesson, let's briefly review what we studied in our last issue. God told Abraham to leave his family and his home in Ur of the Chaldees. He partially obeyed God by leaving his home, but he disobeyed by taking his father, Terah, and his nephew, Lot, with him. Years passed and it was only after his father died and his nephew was rescued out of Sodom and Gomorrah that Abraham finally went into the Promised Land. However, when Abraham reached Canaan, it was not the land flowing with milk and honey as he thought; there was drought in the land when he arrived and the place was dusty, dirty, and full of rocks. Abraham thought, "This can't be the land flowing with milk and honey", so he ran off to Egypt.

While in Egypt, Abraham tried to give his wife, Sarah, away. She was so attractive, even in her older age, that the Pharaoh of Egypt wanted her. Abraham agreed and told Pharaoh that she was his sister, which was a half-truth; Sarah was his half-sister. Abraham agreed with Pharaoh just to save his own neck, but the Lord spoke to Pharaoh and told him that Sarah was Abraham's wife. Pharaoh was very upset with Abraham, gave Sarah back, and Abraham and Sarah finally returned to the land of Canaan that God had promised them. This time, however, they took a helper with them from Egypt - Hagar. Abraham was still trying to help God.

Now, it had been a few years since God had promised Abraham a son, and Sarah came up with an idea - Abraham's son could come through Hagar, the handmaiden. Abraham thought this was a good idea and Ishmael was born. By this time everything was going wrong and this is when Sarah finally decided to believe the plan of God. Sarah became submissive as a wife and even called Abraham "Lord". It was when she became submissive to Abraham that her womb opened up and Isaac was conceived and born.

Even though Sarah finally yielded to God, she was having problems with Hagar because Hagar wanted Ishmael (being the first-born) to dominate and have the rights of the first-born. Abraham loved his son, Ishmael, and had much respect for Hagar; he did not want to make them leave. Sarah was the one that wanted them to leave, but it was not in hatred. Sarah knew that things would not work as they were; she knew that ties with Hagar and Ishmael had to be broken. Abraham went before the Lord

and he said, "Lord, I don't want this to happen. I love that boy". God responded, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called". It was then that Abraham asked Hagar and Ishmael to leave. Abraham matured greatly after this time and he and Sarah began flowing together in faith. Verse 17 of Hebrews, chapter 11 brings us back to the faith of Abraham, and in verses 17-19, we have the testing of Abraham's faith. Listen to me carefully - this testing came from God. Verse 17 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried (tested), offered up Isaac: and he (Abraham) that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son". Listen to me carefully - you cannot progress in the Christian life without a test of progress. I often ask my children on Saturdays, "Did you make your bed?" If they say, "Yes, Daddy.", I will say, "Fine, I'm going upstairs to check." I can tell immediately whether they have made their beds by their response. This is a way of testing their progress.

Let us find out what James says about testing. James, chapter 1 and verse 12 says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." The temptations being referred to in James, chapter 1, are the temptations of Satan. These are the same testings and trials as mentioned in Mark, chapter 4, that come to steal the seed that was sown in your heart. Satan will try his best to steal the word out of your heart because he does not want you to influence anybody else into the kingdom of God, or influence believers to grow up. When harassing thoughts, pressures, and circumstances come against you to tempt you to give up the Word, you need to walk in patience. When you step out in faith it seems that everything goes wrong, but the Word says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." (Psalm 34:19). That is what James is saying - "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." To "endure" means to take the promises of God and the weapons of God and to come against Satan and all of his fiery darts, knowing that no weapon formed against you shall prosper.

Again, James, chapter 1 and verse 12 says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Verse 13: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." God can not be tempted with evil and He does not tempt you with evil. God will never use evil to test you. He does not need Satan to come against you to do His work. God does not say, "I need some things done today. Satan come here, I am going to

use you. John has been walking with Me and I want you to test him.” God does not need Satan and God can not tempt and test us with evil. So, what does that mean? God does not test us with evil, but He does test us with good. When God sends prosperity, not only is it a blessing, it is a test. He wants to know whether you will use that prosperity for His kingdom or whether you will fall in love with the riches rather than with the Giver of the riches. He is testing you. Listen to me carefully - there are times when God will give you riches and He will turn right around and say, “Give it back to Me.” He wants to make sure you do not have a hold on it. He does not mind if you have a nice car as long as the car does not have you; as long as you understand that freely you have received, freely give. That is what happened with Isaac. God gave Isaac, but He asked for him back. We are going to find out something about Abraham's attitude; he understood the character of God. If you do not understand the character of God, you will think that God is the one causing many of the evil things around you. You will not know whether it is the devil or God tempting you, and this will cause you to live in a world of confusion. Abraham grew and matured until he finally got to know the character of God. The greatest thing you can do in your Christian life is to learn to know the character of God. Knowing God's character can tell you whether or not something is of God. When sicknesses comes into your body, you do no need to say, “Well, maybe I did something wrong and God is testing me.” If you have done something wrong you will know it in your heart.

Verses 14-17 continue: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” The gift that came down to Abraham and Sarah was Isaac. He was a gift from God. They could not have done this naturally; it was supernatural. Look at Genesis, chapter 22, beginning in verse 1. Abraham had matured to the point that he was fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. Before this time, he was persuaded, but never fully persuaded. My friends, you do not know you are fully persuaded until the tests come; and the tests come from God because He wants to know if you are fully persuaded.

Beginning in verse 1: “And it came to pass after these things (all the things in the previous chapter), that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son (his only Jewish son) Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah.” The land of Moriah is also mentioned in Second Chronicles, chapter 3 and verse 1. This is the threshing floor of Ornan that David came and bought. Eventually, the temple would be built here. This is also the same place where Abraham offered up Isaac.

Verses 2 and 3 continue: “...get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him.” Notice the beginning of verse 3: “And Abraham rose up early in the morning.” If Abraham rose up early in the morning, what had he been doing all night? Sleeping! I want you to understand Abraham’s faith. If God asked you to offer up your child, would you sleep? The answer is probably no. But, if you were fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able also to perform, you would sleep.

Verses 3-5: “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave (split or cut) the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 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.” Abraham knew something. He knew that Isaac would not die, because what God was asking was contrary to His Word. He knew this was nothing more than a test of his faith. God wanted to know if Abraham was really willing to follow Him; and God is the same today - all He wants to know is if we are really willing to follow Him.

It says in verses 6-8, “And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son (Isaac carried the wood); and he took the fire (a torch) in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide...” The Hebrew word for “provide” is “Jireh” - the Lord will provide. Picture Isaac walking up the mountain and saying, “Dad, where is the sacrifice?” Abraham responds, “God will provide.” Abraham still did not know, in

the natural, where the sacrifice would come from. He knew he was going to go up and sacrifice before God, but he knew it was not going to be his son. He even knew while he was tying him down and raising the knife. But his heart was so confident in God, he knew God would be faithful to His nature. That is when God said, "You do trust Me, don't you, Abraham?" Verse 8 says again, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." Notice, Abraham did not say, "I am going to kill you", He said, "God is going to provide a lamb." Abraham had strong faith in God and also knew that it was against God's Word to offer children as a sacrifice. When God approached Abraham, he knew that it was a test of obedience. He went all the way up the mountain saying, "God is going to provide a lamb."

Verses 9-14 continue: "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord (the Lord Jesus Christ) called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Jehovah-jireh means, "the Lord will provide" or actually, the Hebrew means, "the Lord will see to it."

Look back at chapter 21, verses 9-12. "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, harken unto her voice; For in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

In other words, God is saying, "Sarah's right--she's on track, Abraham,." This is where the striving in Abraham finally quit. What little bit of help he was trying to offer God, he now quit.

Why could Abraham take Isaac to the top of the mountain and tell those men at the bottom of the mountain, "We'll be back"? Why could he tell Isaac on the way up, "God will provide a lamb?"

Again, it says in Hebrews chapter 11, verses 17 and 18, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried (tested) of God, 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."

Abraham now understood the character of God; he understood that if God said "In Isaac shall thy seed be called", that meant that Isaac was going to have to live. For his seed to be as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea, Isaac would have to live. He knew that when God asked him to offer Isaac, this was a test of God. Even to the point of pulling his knife out, Abraham knew that it would be through Isaac that his seed would be called. Abraham knew inside of him that even if the knife did come down, God would resurrect Isaac from the dead.

Verses 18 and 19 say again, "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting (or to put all your faith together and come up with a conclusion), that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." What is this saying? It is saying that God was able to raise him up from the dead. Abraham had nothing to look back to, even in the natural, to think his son would be raised from the dead; he only had God's word. My friend, faith is not based on whether it worked for someone else; faith is based on God's Word. Abraham had such confidence in God, he was going to see to it that if the knife came down and his son died, he would walk down that mountain with a living boy because God would raise him from the dead. He knew that God promised, "In him, (Isaac), will your seed be called", which meant that Isaac had to live.

Verses 19 again: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

The word "figure" is actually the Greek word "parabolay" where we get "parable". This was a parable. Parables paint a picture for us. This is a parable of substitution; it is a parable of the work of Jesus Christ.

You have probably heard it taught time and time again that Isaac was a type of the Lord, that he was laid on the altar to be sacrificed, and that Abraham was a type of Father God to slay him for us; but that is not true. Isaac is a type of us. We should

have been on that altar. We should have been killed; but at the last moment, God took a substitute and put Him on the altar in our place. The ram is a type of Jesus: He was offered up for you and me, and we were allowed to go free. We should have been killed, but we were not. The story of Abraham, and Isaac is a true story, but God used it as a parable for us to understand that Jesus, our sacrificial lamb, was offered for us in our place; and through Him we have eternal life.

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