

Good Shepherd, February, 2021

Genesis 22:1-18

Abraham was a man of great faith. Scripture says that he was “the friend of God.” In our text Abraham was tested by God! Abraham loved his son, Isaac. Abraham knew that the Savior would come from a descendant of Isaac. But Abraham's love for his son might, in time, crowd out his love for God. Abraham needed an opportunity to make God most important in his life. This test proved Abraham's love for and dedication to God. But we ask -

What kind of God would do this?

What kind of God would test Abraham in this way? We want to know because if God tested Abraham this way, He might test us, too.

1. *God would not test us to see what is in our heart*
2. *God already knows what is in our heart*
3. *God tests us so we can see what is in our heart; what is most important in our life*

What kind of God would test us? A God who loves us and wants us to love and trust Him.

God tested Abraham in this way, Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about. **What kind of God would demand this kind of sacrifice from a father?** We want to know because if God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, He could ask us to sacrifice something in our lives.

Abraham had left his past behind when God told him to leave his home and travel to Canaan. Now God was asking Abraham to leave his future behind, too!

1. *God promised Abraham a son, Isaac*
2. *A descendant of Isaac would be the Savior of the world*
3. *But now God wanted Abraham to sacrifice Isaac*
4. *If Isaac died, there would be no Savior!*
5. *This didn't make sense!*

Perhaps Abraham would have liked some time to discuss this problem with someone, anyone! However, Early the next morning Abraham got up and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. I wonder if Abraham had a good night's sleep.

What kind of God would ask a father to sacrifice his son? This is our God who is serious about His claim on our lives and who will not hesitate to ask us to sacrifice those things that might take us away from Him.

This is the same Father who sent His Son, Jesus, to be the sacrifice for your sins and my sins and all sins.

It would have taken about three days to walk to the area of Moriah. Can you imagine how Abraham must have felt when he saw Moriah in the distance! Abraham said to his servants, Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.

What kind of God would cause so much hurt in Abraham's life? We want to know. Because if God caused Abraham this pain, what would stop God from causing similar pain?

Abraham gave the servants instructions to camp out and wait until he and Isaac returned! What a strange thing for Abraham to say. We will come back to you! If Abraham sacrificed his son, how would it be possible for both to return?

The writer of Hebrews tells us what Abraham was thinking: Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead. Abraham knew that God could do anything. If Abraham sacrificed his son, he was sure that God could raise Isaac from the dead and keep His promise of a special descendant! That's faith!

What kind of God would ask for such a sacrifice? As Isaac and Abraham continued their journey, Isaac asked, The fire and wood are

here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? Abraham replied, God will provide the lamb.

At this time, Abraham was over 100 years old. Abraham loaded the wood for the sacrifice on his son! What kind of father would expect his son to carry the wood for his sacrifice? Note that Isaac did not say, "Father, why are you doing this to me?" Perhaps Abraham had told Isaac what God wanted to be done. Isaac was willing.

Another Father asked His Son to do a similar thing. Scripture says, Jesus, went out, carrying His own cross to the place of the skull. Our Heavenly Father gave His Son as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. And Jesus was willing to die for us!

What kind of God would supply a substitute sacrifice? When Isaac and Abraham came to Moriah, the altar was built, the wood was placed upon the altar, and Isaac allowed himself to be tied up and put upon the altar. And Abraham reached for his knife.....

You could read this Scripture many times and not understand what was going through Abraham's mind. You know how this ends because your Sunday School teachers told you what happened. But Abraham didn't know! Abraham trusted the promises of God! That's faith.

It's like that with us, too. When God tests us, we never know how it's going to end. We simply trust God and His promises!

Then the Angel of the Lord, Jesus, spoke, Do not lay a hand on the boy. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me, your only son. Nearby Abraham saw a ram, caught by the horns, in the brush. Abraham sacrificed the ram instead of His son! Isaac, who was good as dead, was alive!

The promise of a Savior for all **would** take place!

What kind of God would supply a substitute sacrifice for Isaac?
We want to know, because if God provided a substitute for Isaac, will He provide one for us, too?

Our God loves us and sacrificed His Son as our Substitute putting our sins upon Jesus and punishing Him for our sins so that we wouldn't have to suffer!

Abraham had an outstanding faith. The writer of Hebrews wrote, By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered Isaac. By this testing God brought Abraham to trust fully in the promises of God.

Friends, our God is the One who loved us, who loves us, and who will always love us. When the Lord tests our faith, remember that the Lord loves us as no other. Read His Word, God's promises. Know those promises! Trust His promises. Wait to see the great things our Savior has planned for us!

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