

What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM:

“God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

Study Number Eight – Genesis 22:1-19

God is in the business and very much interested in developing our character. That equals unexplainable circumstances, sufferings of all sorts. And we’re going to see our hero in this kind of a drama in this final episode.

Fénelon has to say:

(Fénelon: Selected Writings – The Classics of Western Spirituality Edited and translated by Chad Helms)

While thinking about the misery of your privileged position, about the servitude from which you cry out in pain, the words of Jesus Christ to Saint Peter came to my mind: “In times past you used to walk where you would; but when you are in a more advanced age, another—a stronger one—will guide you and will lead you where you will not want to go.”³⁹ Let yourself go and be guided, Madame, and do not hesitate along the path. You will go to pure love, to perfect renunciation, to total death of your own will while accomplishing that of God who leads you according to his good pleasure.

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Yes, there comes a time when we recognize the fact that God does determine to lead us in His way, to His place, and according to His plan.

In Genesis 21 we had a tremendous passage because it was the fulfillment of all the promises that God had made twenty-five years earlier.

When they left Ur of Chaldees it was to go to the land of Canaan. And there, waiting for twenty-five years, finally the miraculous child is born.

So Isaac is on the scene. We left them with another separation however in that Ishmael and Hagar were put out of the house forever and now Isaac is the promised son.

There are TWO WORDS that are vital to understand before we get into the subject. Abraham is probably about 130 and Isaac is probably 30 years old.

The TWO WORDS that we don't often discuss are the words:

TEST and the word

TEMPTATION.

We're going to see the word TEST in our passage. But we also have run into TEMPTATION often in scripture.

What's the difference between the two?

A TEST comes from God and is meant for our SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.

God is in the business of testing our progress in the same way a professor tests our apprehension and appropriation of the material that he's presented.

TEMPTATION always comes from Satan and is designed to DESTROY US.

His entrée in the temptation is:

the WORLD—and its attractiveness,

the FLESH—our old nature within us, and

from a SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE—he will direct and orchestrate this temptation for his own accomplishment.

Now, first of all it is our responsibility to always be submitting to the test, but overcoming the temptation.

Too many times we reverse those two. We try to overcome the test by asking God to change the circumstances and get us out of a mess. But we find ourselves submitting to the temptation, in the weakness of the flesh or the attractiveness of that which is put before us.

TRIALS are designed for our GROWTH.

TEMPTATIONS are going to be produced and bring about EVIL, which will break fellowship with the Lord—and that's what Satan desires.

Now when we start talking about trials, some people think that the way God works is kind of like retirement. We work our tail off real hard early and then we just kind of coast in and retire and let up and shut it down. When God is busy in the orchestration of the test, He starts with the trifling and then He moves to the greater.

He starts with the lower peaks and then He goes to the lofty summits. So if we're thinking it gets easier the further we go along in our Christian life, we better get a new thought. Because biblically we're going to discover that it gets more intense as time goes along.

It's like we can run the mile first and then the marathon much later. It's like we wade in the shallows before we fight the waves of the ocean.

And that's the way God works in developing spiritual growth. He is not going to allow old Abraham to sit around now and doddle and just spend quality time with his son Isaac and then just go out in a blaze of glory.

God is not done with him yet, nor is God done with us.

Everything has an explanation when it's understood to be a part of the divine curriculum.

Now why did we say that? Because here we're dealing with the TEST.

The big test that's going to come now:

Has Abraham forgotten the Giver in his love for his son Isaac?

Is his love for Isaac greater than his love for the Father?

Are his plans and purposes for family and for Isaac and Sarah greater than those of God?

Thirty years should probably give us a pretty good shot, shouldn't it, as to what his condition was? And we'll see it unfold in the passage.

Each of these passages have to do with a test:

1 Peter 1:5-7

you are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials (or tests), that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, ...

Job 23:10

He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, ...

And he goes on to describe what they're going through there.

Romans 8:17-18

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. ...

Isaiah 48:10-11

See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. ...

That's graphic and clear.

2 Chronicles 32:31 (NLT)

However, when ambassadors arrived from Babylon to ask about the remarkable events that had taken place in the land, God withdrew from Hezekiah [Now the purpose is in the last

phrase] in order to test him and to see what was really in his heart.

The Babylonians came and Hezekiah blew it. He showed them everything. And after the test God told him how he had failed in what he had done, because the Babylonians were eventually going to come and literally destroy Jerusalem and take the children of the southern kingdom of Judah into captivity.

There's another time when Jesus does this very same thing:

John 6:6

And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

Remember Philip? He was in charge of food service. The Lord asked, "Where are we going to get bread to feed this multitude?" Five-thousand plus all the women and the kids. Philip just said, "A whole year's salary wouldn't be enough to give everybody a little bite."

Why did the Lord do that? Because standing right in his presence was the provision if he were aware of the fact that the Lord is the Bread of Life and that He is unlimited in His resources to provide it.

But like so many of us, we come too late to the answer. And the picture here is one to test him.

Isaiah 43:2

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Could we also put Daniel 3 here with this? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego went through the fiery furnace and the Lord went with them through it.

God's been preparing Abraham for this crisis experience, this test of his faith, through his whole life—all of those things that happened in the times of separation, in the times of victory, in the times of defeat, with the situation with Hagar and the birth of Ishmael.

But now this is the most serious conflict. See the principle? He started out just leaving Ur of Chaldees but now we are on a big one. And here he's going to have to trust God that he truly loves Him. And does he love God by the same measure in return? Is he willing to do what the Lord asks him to do?

Now there are two passages of scripture that ought to undergird our thinking tonight as we prepare to study:

Psalms 26:2-3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,

examine my heart and my mind;
for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in your truth.

We get scared when praying that. Why? He's going to do it anyway and why don't we just, by saying that, let Him know that whatever He wants to throw at us is going to be for our good and His purpose and He's going to accomplish it. So invite Him like the Psalmist:

Psalm 26:2

Test me, O Lord, and try me,...

“Take me to the potter's house, throw me on the wheel, make me into any kind of vessel You want. I want to glorify and honor You with the remaining days of my life. So test me.”

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, [look through my whole house]
and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Undergirding both of those scriptures is the acknowledgment that we're going to be tested.

There is the acknowledgement that this test will measure

spiritual progress and growth by how we handle them.

At the end of 2 Corinthians chapter 13, Paul really has a pregnant command for the Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

Here we go—verse 1.

v. 1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.

“Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied.”

In our last passage we said that one of the priorities of these remaining scenes of Abraham’s life is instant obedience. He probably wakes up every morning singing, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way.”

And here he is. He’s ready and available. He’s ready to do whatever the Lord wants him to do.

Opening phrase:

“Some time later”

We don't have any timeframe for that, but we're just conjecturing if Isaac is a type of Christ, he would be 33 years of age—which is what a lot of writers think. But at least let's say that it has been at least 30 years that have passed since our last time together.

What does that tell us?

God never gets through working on us.

The very fact that He's doing this to a 130-year-old man ought to make us realize that we're going to be worked on all the way to the grave.

Philippians 1:6

You can be confident of this very thing that he who began a good work in you will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Either we'll meet Him at our physical death or we'll meet Him at the rapture of the church.

1 John 3:2

Soon we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

The work is instantaneously completed when we enter into His presence. But we can count on this, there's going to be

activity in our lives and sometime later, God's working on Abraham still.

Now we gave up Ishmael and now we've got to give up Isaac—so we can see that it's a whole different ballgame.

God never lets up! He is constantly:

WORKING,

WEEDING,

WEEPING,

PRUNING,

PROBING,

PICKING,

SPANKING,

STICKING,

SMASHING,

TESTING,

TEARING,

THRASHING,
BLASTING,
BEATING,
BLOCKING,
RUINING,
RESTRAINING,
RENEWING, and
REWORKING.

All of those things are true of His tools and the way He works in our individual lives.

Now, after all the previous trials, we should understand that life is going to be a continual hassle. And the test presupposes that there is work to be done.

There's got to be:

DISCIPLINE,
DEVELOPMENT, and
DIRECTION.

And all that's part and parcel of what we're learning.

If we want an illustration of God using the Lord Jesus to test the disciples, Mark 4:39-41 is great.

Remember they got in the boat, were going to go across the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus had been teaching all day so He fell asleep in the back of the boat.

As was known on the Sea of Galilee, a norther blew up and literally caused these experienced fishermen to think they were going to drown.

And when all things had exhausted, they came to the Lord and said, "Don't you care that we perish while You're lying there asleep?"

Mark 4:39-41

And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. And He said to them now, "Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?" And they became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Guess what? They flunked the test so they're going to get it again with another opportunity, because God does not give up.

And if we see a pattern in the experiences in our life, know God's got His finger on the test that we are facing. There are some things in our life that are an offense to Him and His holiness, and He wants them extricated so that we might be more fruitful for His glory and honor.

The question that comes before us is:

Will Abraham go all out for God, will he give his very best for the Lord?

Here comes a test. It's an "opportunity in overalls" to show us what's in the heart of the individual.

Now God demands total submission of our will to His own. Will that happen in this study?

There are **THREE DOMINANT THINGS** that have to be true if we're going to respond to the test properly:

1. **FAITH**—we have to trust Him when the circumstances are not explainable,
2. **OBEDIENCE**—what He says we will do, and
3. **SUBMISSION** to divine authority or to divine sovereignty.

These are the things that God looks for in the test.

Now, when we pass through the test, we can learn that God has all the grace we need to be victorious, He will be faithful in the midst of it, and He is totally sufficient for any circumstance that He allows to happen in our life.

Having said that, let's move through the passage and notice that Abraham is quick and ready and available—just like he was back in chapter 18 to prepare the meal for them.

Here he is, ready to go, ready to do what the Lord wants him to do.

Warren Wiersbe often is able in a sentence to capture the whole theme. This sentence is one of the best summaries of this passage:

Our faith is not really tested until God asks us to bear what seems unbearable, do what seems unreasonable, and expect what seems impossible.

(source unknown)

All of these things are part and parcel of the test that we're getting ready to see.

There isn't anything that would recommend Abraham to us, but God knows this man's heart and He has not been disappointed. He's going to continue to work.

And the very fact that he says, "Here I am," means:

he's SENSITIVE,

he's READY,

he's SUBMISSIVE to whatever the Father wants him to do,

he's EAGER and READY to get after it.

Henri Nouwen, who is now with the Lord, said:

(A Continual Feast by Jan Karon)

Our tendency is to run from the painful realities or try to change them as soon as possible. But cure without care makes us into rulers, controllers, [and] manipulators.

(source unknown)

We are going to be in the furnace, in the fire of affliction, we're going to be tested—just like our hero.

v. 2 Then God said, “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.”

“Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son Isaac,’”

Isn't that interesting? We thought there were two boys.

We're going to see it FOUR TIMES—“only son.”

The only one the Lord recognizes is the son given by the Spirit of God, miraculously in answer to the covenant. Not the one that was born to Hagar, even though the father is Abraham.

“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.”

Now He had said, “You go, leave Ur of Chaldees and I’ll show you where you’re going to go.”

Now He says, “go to the mountains and I will tell you which one it is and where you’re going to be.”

What’s the first thing he thinks about? Everything that the Lord is saying is a contradiction to the promises and the commands that he’s given earlier. And so he’s wondering what God is up to.

Romans 8:32

He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Is it God who occupies our vision? Or is it Isaac at this point?

The Lord is saying, “Abraham, it’s not Eleazer, it’s not Ishmael, it’s Isaac. You’ve got to let go of everything to receive what I have for you. The closed hand must be open, the empty

to receive the gracious gift of God's Son."

Every word He said dropped like hot lead into the heart of Abraham. Slowly has the finger of God moved over our most cherished treasures, marking them for ruin. And that's the picture.

"take now your son"

We would think that because he's 30 years of age, the Lord would say, "Invest him now with honors. He's ready to be productive. It's time for the possession of his inheritance. Find him a bride for a companion."

All those things would seem very right, wouldn't they? But the whole focus of this trial isn't on Isaac anyway. It's on Abraham.

"Take ... Isaac, whom you love,"

Does God test our love?

"By this shall all men know that you're my disciples if you have love one for another," He said in the upper room. (ref. John 13:35)

To Peter on the shores of the Sea of Galilee in His resurrected body He said, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" (ref. John 21:15)

“These other disciples sitting here are more than these fish that we’ve just caught. Who’s first in your life? Where’s your love?”

Revelation 2:4

I have this against you, church of Ephesus, because you have your first love.

So part of the test, after the passage of time, is his love still as intense for the Lord and is he fully cooperating in his obedience with the purpose and plan?

We can almost hear him saying, “Now, now, wait a minute, Lord. Let’s reason this out. How about taking my cattle? I’ve got thousands of them. You can have them all. Are you sure You don’t mean Ishmael? I’ve got silver and gold. He’s my only son! He’s the son of the covenant! What will Sarah say? Lord, let thousands of rams be given, every bullock in the stall is Yours. Even let me but...oh Lord, not him. Lord, I waited all these years for this boy!”

And so there’s not one question, but notice beautifully there’s complete submission and obedience from a servant’s heart.

Hannah Hurnard had a piece published in her book *Mountain of Spices* called “In Acceptance Lieth Peace”:

(Mountain of Spices by Hannah Hurnard)

O my heart still;
Let thy restless worries cease
And accept His will.
Though this test be not thy choice,
It is His—therefore rejoice.
(page unknown)

What we're seeing here is going to be the secret of triumph.
He's trusting that God is able to fulfill any promise, no matter
what He demands of His servants.

Jeremiah 33:3

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and
unsearchable things you don't even know.'

It's a TRIPLE COMMAND, isn't it?

Every word is hard:

“TAKE,”

“GO,” and

“SACRIFICE.”

Everything is totally contrary to what he would want.

Charles Colson said:

“Life isn’t like a book. Life isn’t logical or sensible or orderly. Life is a mess most of the time. And theology must be lived in the midst of that mess.”

(source unknown)

v. 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

You’d think he would take his time getting everything ready for the trip, right?

“Early the next morning Abraham got up and he saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.”

Psalm 119:60

I will hasten and not delay
to obey your commandments.

“I will be quick and eager to obey, even though I don’t understand.”

We would find the same thing true in Jesus’ life:

John 9:4

I must work the works of Him who sent Me, while it is day; the night is coming, when no man can work.

There's an urgency about accomplishing His purpose.

Here Abraham is in a hurry to be obedient. And through this deep experience he knows God is at work so:

“he set out for the place God had told him about.”

Now there are **THREE BASICS** that we have to put dominant in our thinking when we recognize that what we're going through is a test from the Lord, okay?

1. **TRUST** has to be dominant. We have to believe that God is still trustworthy.
2. The safest place to be is to **SUBMIT**, especially when we don't understand.
3. **OBEDIENCE** is top priority.

TRUST, SUBMIT and **OBEY**—we're seeing all three of them in our hero.

Woo! This is getting good. Aren't you glad you're here? Oh man—verse 4.

v. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the

place in the distance.

“On the third day”—this is no short trip—“Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.”

It’s been a long, arduous three days. That’s like calling a timeout before the field goal kicker can kick that goal-winning goal. It had to be total misery during that timeout period.

Here’s three days of taking his last walk with his much-loved son. But he’s got the trust of Job.

Job 13:15

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.

Carol Kent quotes Ken Gire in her book:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns
Upside Down by Carol Kent)

I CHOOSE PERSEVERANCE

HOW DO WE GET TO THE MORNING,
TO THE SUNSHINE, TO THE JOY?
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY. BY WAITING FOR IT.
WE CAN’T HURRY THE DAWN,
NO MATER HOW ANXIOUSLY WE PACE THE FLOOR
OR HOW IMPATIENTLY WE WATCH THE CLOCK.
AND SO THE QUESTION IS NOT DO WE WAIT

OR NOT WAIT, BECAUSE WAITING IS ALL WE CAN DO.
THE QUESTION IS, HOW WILL WE WAIT?
WILL WE WAIT WELL . . . OR WILL WE WAIT POORLY?
—KEN GIRE

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Carol is determined that she and her husband are going to wait with perseverance patiently for God to reveal the next chapters in their lives.

v. 5 He 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.”

“He 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.’”

Isn't that awesome? That's the reason that he is in the hall of faith, or the hall of fame of saints in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11 picks up on this very phrase of “We:”

Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, “In Isaac your descendants shall be called.” He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received

him back as a type.

Abraham could have said to the servants, “I don’t know how God’s going to do this, but we’re going over there and worship for a minute and then we’re going to come back to you.”

Accounting God faithful to raise Isaac from the dead, he is trusting Him fully.

QUESTION:

Can we trust God when we’re totally unable to see how He’s going to work out His will in our life?

Now to be honest, can we really trust God when we’re totally unable to see how He’s going to work out His will in our life?

God is trustworthy. We can take it to the bank.

Isaiah 50:7

Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, I know I will not be put to shame.

Now notice there’s not a word of complaint, there’s no selfish clinging to his rights, there’s a deep abiding peace here— submission to God’s plan, His authority and trust and faith to take God at His word.

Brennan Manning said it this way:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns
Upside Down by Carol Kent)

RUTHLESS TRUST ULTIMATELY COMES DOWN TO THIS:
FAITH IN THE PERSON OF JESUS
AND HOPE IN HIS PROMISE.
IN SPITE OF ALL DISCONCERTING APPEARANCES,
WE STARE DOWN DEATH WITHOUT NERVOUSNESS
AND ANTICIPATE RESURRECTION
SOLELY BECAUSE JESUS HAS SAID,
“YOU HAVE MY WORD ON IT.”
—BRENNAN MANNING

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And so it's God's word here that's obviously carrying Abraham from victory unto victory in this great, great account.

v. 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,

“Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and he placed it on his son Isaac, and he carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,”

Now that phrase occurs here a couple of times. The reason it occurs is this is God's side of Calvary. It was God the Father

and God the Son that went up to Golgotha's Brow. God the Son acknowledged that at the time of His being made sin for us when He cried, "*Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?* My God, My God, why Have you forsaken Me?"

Christ has been victorious to that point because He always counted on the presence of the Father with Him.

Here we have Abraham and the son, the two of them going up the mountain of sacrifice.

Now isn't it interesting that God so loved the world that He gave His Isaac? He gave His Son?

Here Abraham is demanded to give his son Isaac, not his son Ishmael. Ishmael was never offered because Ishmael is an act of the flesh. He represents legalistic works and performance, and they are never acceptable to God.

Here it's Isaac. Look at the wrenching of his heart in verse 7!

v. 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son," Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

"Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, 'Father?' 'Yes, my son,' Abraham replied. 'The fire and wood are here [dad],' Isaac said, 'but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?'"

“Now Dad I know you’re 130 and you’re probably fading a little bit with your mental faculties, but I noticed you’ve got the fire and the wood here but where’s the most important thing? Where is the lamb for the offering?”

We think of this New Testament verse:

John 1:29

The next day [John the Baptist said as] he saw Jesus coming, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Now here Abraham is going to answer the question and explain to his son Isaac the absence of the lamb.

v. 8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

“Abraham answered, ‘God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ And the two of them went on together.”

Yes, God will provide. That is Jehovah Jireh—we sing it all the time. The Lord will provide, and He does. And He lives up to that name on a daily basis with those who completely trust Him to meet our needs in various ways.

Once again verse 6:

“the two of them went together.”

And now verse 8, the two of them are together. This is a work between the father and the son and:

“God himself will provide a lamb.”

Abraham is obeying without question. He’s leaving the details and the circumstances to God as they go to the place of worship.

Now Abraham is mentioned SEVENTY TIMES in these verses, so we know that the whole theme is upon him.

And the Lord is mentioned TWENTY-ONE TIMES.

It’s interesting to hear what Jerry Sittser says:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns Upside Down by Carol Kent)

THE SUPREME CHALLENGE TO ANYONE FACING
CATASTROPHIC LOSS INVOLVES FACING
THE DARKNESS OF THE LOSS ON THE ONE HAND,
AND LEARNING TO LIVE WITH RENEWED VITALITY
AND GRATITUDE ON THE OTHER . . .
LOSS CAN DIMINISH US,
BUT IT CAN ALSO EXPAND US . . .
LOSS CAN FUNCTION AS A

CATALYST TO TRANSFORM US.
—JERRY SITTSER

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Paul and Silas, beaten and in the dungeon at night, singing with gratitude hymns of praise to our God.

When we turn the corner in the midst of the test and we're expressing gratitude and praise to God, we're on the way out of it, and we're ready to take the lesson.

What we're finding here is that they are holding onto hope. As Carol Kent would say, "I choose gratitude in the midst of sorrow."

v. 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

"When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood."

Now isn't that gracious of God? There was a very painful thing that had to go on.

They're on the top of that hill and he had to tell his son that he was going to be the sacrifice. There could have been all

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kinds of things said and recorded here, but just like God pulled a curtain between heaven and earth and it was dark from twelve until three while Christ was made sin for us, so the Lord pulls the curtain here and He lets the tears flow and sprinkle on the rocks of the altar as an old man tells his son that he indeed is going to be the sacrifice.

Isaac is willing. He trusts his father fully and completely.

Do we love the Lord so much that we would put ourselves in that kind of a position? Here he loves his son, but he reveals to him what God has asked of him.

QUESTION:

Would we give up everything? Would we go sell it all? Would we truly say, “I love You more than these?? Is our all on the altar—our body, our belongings, our blessings?

Romans 12 tells us we’re supposed to do that:

Romans 12:1

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Is our Isaac on the altar?

Isaac is a picture of the sinner bound by sin.

David Roper said the following:

Some theologians divide transgressions into “sins of the flesh” and “sins of the spirit.” This means that some sins originate in our physical passions; others come from our “heart” or disposition. In the story of the prodigal son, the elder brother’s attitude gives us an example of the latter.

We’re inclined to single out the prodigal son as worse than his brother. But it’s worth noting that when the story ends, the prodigal is restored, forgiven, and full of joy, while the elder brother stands outside and refuses to go in.

The stay-at-home son is more than background filler. He makes us think about the state of our heart, for sour moods create untold misery.

Discontent, jealousy, bitterness, resentment, defensiveness, touchiness, and ingratitude are the dispositions that ruin our marriages, wither our children, alienate our friends, and embitter every life—including our own.

—David H. Roper

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, June 2, 2007)

Wow! This is like a dramatic story, isn’t it?

v. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

“Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.”

He's obeying, he's yielding, he's cooperating, and the flashing blade is raised heavenward.

How would we handle that situation?

Brenda Waggoner says:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns Upside Down by Carol Kent)

I CHOOSE VULNERABILITY

REVEALING OUR WEAKNESSES
HELPS OTHERS FEEL CONNECTED TO US.
FULLY UNDERSTANDING AND UNCONDITIONALLY
LOVING US SHABBY HUMANS.
JESUS SHOWS UP BEST IN OUR WEAKNESS.
HE SHINES BRIGHTLY THROUGH THE CRACKS
IN OUR FLAWED ARMOR.
—BRENDA WAGGONER

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And here she is discovering a phenomenal ministry by acknowledging with honesty and vulnerability, the heartache and the trial that she will face for right now the rest of her life.

v. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he

replied.

“But the angel of the Lord”—the Lord Jesus—“called out to him from heaven, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied.”

There was no greater sound ever heard.

v. 12 “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

“‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘Do not do anything to him.’—WHY?

Two NEGATIVE COMMANDS:

“Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son,”—WHAT?—“your only son.””

There it is again.

“I know now that you would give up everything for Me, including your much-loved son.”

Abraham will never regret what he has done on this occasion.

“‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not

withheld from me your son, your only son.”

So this is the third time we have the statement, “your only son.” It’s found in:

1. verse 2,
2. verse 12, and now
3. verse 16.

God is just saying, “This is the only one I recognize. He is indeed your son.”

Let’s move on quickly to the remaining verses now that the crisis has passed.

v. 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

“Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.”

Sacrificial substitute—it’s a picture of Christ on Calvary’s Cross.

While they were walking up one side of the mountain, the ram

was coming up the other side because God had already made provision for what He was getting ready to do.

In the fact that now he was going to prove the fact that he was indeed faithful.

v. 14 So Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide.” And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

“So Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide.”—Jehovah Jireh—“And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.’”

Now notice the BLESSING that comes out of the OBEDIENCE. This is so good. Here’s the reinstatement of the covenant again. We’re closing the study with the promises once again.

v. 15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time

“The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time”

v. 16 and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,

“and said, ‘I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because

you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,”

v. 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,

“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.”—We’ve been there and done that two or three times.

“Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,”

v. 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

“and through your offspring all nations on earth”—there’s GENTILE SALVATION—“will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

That’s the REASON all of this is now going to happen.

Carol Kent quotes Jack Hayford:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns Upside Down by Carol Kent)

I CHOOSE RELINQUISHMENT

LIVING WITH A MIRACLE MEANS FAR MORE
THAN EXPERIENCING ITS CONCEPTION.
IT MEANS RESTING IN GOD’S PROMISE AND POWER
EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS THE MIRACLE
ISN’T GOING TO BE BORN.

—JACK HAYFORD

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v. 19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

“Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.”

We have thirteen lessons that come out of this passage of scripture. This is a critical and crucial study for us to understand what God had in mind in bringing Abraham to this particular point.

Lesson #1: God often tests us to see what is really in our hearts.

Lesson #2: Testing in our lives often follows the time of blessing.

Lesson #3: Oftentimes there is no purpose given for the tests, but we discern that they are permitted to measure our progress.

Lesson #4: God is looking for our faith, our obedience, and our submission in the times of testing.

Lesson #5: Testing lets us know that God is not finished forming Christ in us as yet.

Lesson #6: Whatever God asks of us, in the way of sacrifice, He never goes to the limit.

Lesson #7: God makes provision for a substitute sacrifice, even as the Lord Jesus is the center substitute upon Calvary's Cross.

Lesson #8: Following the time of testing, the Lord restates the promises which had been given earlier.

Lesson #9: Jim Elliot said: "If we are the sheep of His pasture, then we are headed for the altar."

Lesson #10: Obedience frees God to pour out His blessings.

Lesson #11: The Lord does not recognize the works of the flesh because of the phrase "only son Isaac" used three times here in this passage.

Lesson #12: The substitute sacrifice helps us be prepared for what Jesus is going to do on Calvary's Cross for our sin.

Lesson #13: Is your Isaac on the altar? Have you given Him your body, your belongings, and your blessings?

In the final chapter of her book, Carol Kent says:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns Upside Down by Carol Kent)

I want to insist that my prayers get answered with the favorable resolution I have requested. But God says, [are you ready for this?] *Carol, I have a bigger plan than you envisioned for this situation. You think your life has fallen apart, but I have a salvage operation in motion that will reach way beyond your family. Trust me. And while you wait, you will experience that I am very close to the brokenhearted. I will not leave you or walk away from You. Keep holding on to hope.* p. 221

Father, we do that now. We thank You that Jesus is the answer. That He is our sin-bearer. That there wasn't a ram coming up the other side of Golgotha. That Your precious Son, our Savior, became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Thank You for that joy that is ours. Thank You too for allowing us to journey with one of the great patriarchs, the forefather of it all. Thank You for Abraham, the friend of God. And thank You for the lessons we've learned as we've traveled with him through these chapters in Genesis together. In

Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM: “God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

Study Number Eight – Genesis 22:1-19

NOTES

v. 1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.

v. 2 Then God said, “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.”

v. 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

v. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

v. 5 He 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.”

v. 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,

v. 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son,” Abraham replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

v. 8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

v. 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

v. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

v. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.

NOTES

v. 12 “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

v. 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

v. 14 So Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide.” And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

v. 15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time

v. 16 and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,

v. 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,

v. 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

v. 19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 22:1-19 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What is the Lord going to do to Abraham, according to verse 1?

3. What is the test that the Lord places upon Abraham, according to verse 2?

4. How did Abraham respond to the Lord's command?

5. How does Abraham respond to Isaac in verse 8?

6. What does the angel of the Lord say to Abraham in verses 11 & 12?

7. What provision does the Lord make in verse 13, and what name did Abraham give to that place?

8. What further words in the conclusion of the passage does the Lord have for Abraham?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: God often tests us to see what is really in our hearts.

LESSON #2: Testing in our lives often follows the time of blessing.

LESSON #3: Oftentimes there is no purpose given for the tests, but we discern that they are permitted to measure our progress.

LESSON #4: God is looking for our faith, our obedience, and our submission in the times of testing.

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