

WHEN GOD TESTS HIS PEOPLE

(Genesis 22:1-14)

Genesis 22 records the greatest and most difficult test that God's servant Abraham has ever faced. As Bible commentator Warren Wiersbe insightfully said: "Our faith is not really tested until God asks us to bear the unbearable, to do what seems unreasonable and to expect what seems impossible." As we reflect on this narrative, let these three essential lessons instruct and encourage us when God tests His people.

- 1. God reveals the _____.**
Abraham's life was marked by a series of tests (Gen.12:1; 13:8-9; 21:11-14). God's command to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering was the supreme trial of his faith (Gen. 22:1-2). Though this trial was both painful and perplexing (Gen. 9:6; 17:19), it was also purposeful. This test was ordained by the Lord for the purpose of revealing and proving the genuineness of Abraham's faith, whether he would continue to trust God without any reservation. Trials and tests are God's appointed means which reveal the genuine character of our faith and which develop and deepen our trust in God (Deut. 8:2; 1 Pet. 1:6-7).
 - 2. God requires our _____.**
Abraham responded to God's command with trustful obedience. He did not argue with God nor voice out any objection. Instead he obeyed God immediately. He did not delay by a second in doing what God required. Instead, he made every preparation for the long journey to Moriah (Gen. 22:3). Abraham also obeyed God steadfastly. For three days, Abraham, together with Isaac and some of his servants traveled to the mountain which God designated (Gen. 22:4). However difficult the command was, Abraham persevered and steadfastly obeyed God's instruction. Furthermore, Abraham obeyed worshipfully and hopefully (Gen. 22:4-5). He did not obey the Lord begrudgingly. He obeyed God with praise in his heart, hoping and relying on God's faithfulness in keeping His promise (Heb. 11:17-19). In the same way, whenever we go through our toughest crises, God requires that our obedience to Him must be immediate, steadfast, worshipful and hopeful (Exo. 19:5; John 14:15; Psalm 112:1,7; 119:4-6; James 1:2; Job 1:20-21)
 - 3. God rewards us with His _____.**
Abraham performed all the necessary rituals when he and his son Isaac reached the mountain of the Lord (Gen. 22:6-9). When he was about to slay his son, God intervened by providing a ram as a substitute sacrifice (Gen.22:10-14). Abraham saw and experienced the majesty and greatness of God's faithfulness and love when the Lord graciously provided the ram to be sacrificed instead of his son. Ultimately, Genesis 22 prefigures and foreshadows God's amazing love for us when God the Father provided the perfect sacrifice for our sins, His own Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Praise God that our Lord is Jehovah Jireh, our faithful and loving God who did not spare His own Son to provide for our greatest need (Rom. 8:32-39).
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