

Friendship With God: The Abraham Journey (4)

When Faith Is Tested

Genesis 22:1–14

Introduction: There are some tests you can study for, and there are other tests that do not measure what you know so much as reveal whom you trust.

- A classroom quiz can be crammed for.
- A hospital waiting room cannot.
- A midnight phone call cannot.

As we come to Genesis 22 Abraham is no beginner in faith. He is an old student in the school of faith, and yet Genesis 22 opens with the words, “*After these things God tested Abraham.*”

Our text today shows us, *God grows our trust through sacrifice and obedience.*

I. Severe test (Genesis 22:1–2)

A. The Shock of the test

1. God tested Abraham (v. 1)
2. Abraham remained in the school of faith (Being elderly doesn’t mean you stop growing in your faith).

B. The severe nature of the trial

1. God tests (the word matters)
2. God tests to refine faith, not tempt to evil (James 1:13; James 1:2–4; 1 Peter 1:6–7)

C. The strain on the promise

- “*Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love...*” (v. 2)
- God’s command appeared to conflict with God’s promise

A faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted.

D. The search of the heart

- What is your “Isaac”?
- God exposes whether we love the gift more than the Giver

Most of us are perfectly happy to sing, “I surrender all,” as long as the Lord never asks for the verse with our Isaac in it.

E. The Safeguard of Scripture

- God stopped Abraham
- God provided a substitute

Faith is tested most severely where the heart is attached most deeply.

II. Steady trust (Genesis 22:3–8)

A. Prompted Obedience

1. “So Abraham rose early in the morning” (v. 3)
2. Immediate obedience

Charles Stanley: *Obedience to God often collides with reason, but true faith leaves the consequences with Him.*

B. Professed Confidence

- “We will come back to you” (v. 5)
- Hebrews 11:17–19

MacArthur, Stanley, and Bible.org make the same central point: *Abraham did not know how God would solve the problem, but he knew God would not break His own word.*

C. Progressive Certainty

- Proverbs 3:5–6
- “God will provide for Himself the lamb” (v. 8)

Faith does not always know what God will do; faith knows who God is.

III. Surrendered Treasure (Genesis 22:9–12)

A. Prepared Offering

- Abraham built the altar
- Arranged the wood
- Bound Isaac
- Laid him on the altar

B. Pained Obedience

- Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife

It is also worth noting that Isaac is almost certainly not a toddler. He is old enough to carry the wood, ask intelligent questions, and climb the mountain.

C. Proven Faith

(James 2:21–24; Deuteronomy 8:2; 1 Peter 1:7)

Tests reveal whether God truly has first place in our lives.

IV. Saving substitute (Genesis 22:13–14)

A. Stilled Judgment

- God stopped Abraham
- Isaac was spared

B. Supplied Sacrifice

- A ram was offered in Isaac’s place (v. 13)

C. Sovereign Salvation

- “Jehovah-Jireh” — “The Lord Will Provide” (v. 14)
(2 Chronicles 3:1; John 1:29; Romans 8:32)

The God who tests His people is also the God who provides the Lamb. (Gen. 22:8)