

A photograph of a simple altar constructed from flat, grey stones stacked on top of each other. Several long, light-colored sticks are laid across the top of the stone stack. The altar is set on a dark, textured surface, possibly a concrete or stone floor. The background is dark and out of focus.

Lessons from the Altar of Jehovah-Jireh

Genesis 22:1-19

The Test Was A Good Thing

- Abraham had been obedient to God from the beginning.
 - He had a comfortable life, but gave it up for God - Gen. 12:1
 - He was not a young man: 75 yrs. old - Gen. 12:4
 - He was a successful man: wealthy businessman - Gen. 12:5
 - He left a secure, safe, urban life to go into an unknown, nomadic, rural life in a land where law was not respected as it was in Ur, Chaldea

The Test Was A Good Thing

- The Adversary sends trials to destroy the faith of Christians, but God sends trials to strengthen our faith
 - James 1:12-17 - “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

The Test Was A Good Thing

- God does not tell us when we are being tested.
- Every trial is an opportunity to grow and glorify God
 - James 1:2-4 - “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

The Test Was A Good Thing

- Some tests must last long in order to accomplish their purpose.
- They produce endurance - James 1:3
- They refine and mature character
 - Rom. 5:3-4 - “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

The Test Was A Good Thing

- God demanded the very dearest thing to Abraham's heart, his only son.
- The command was clear
 - Gen. 22:2 contains three imperative verbs: "Take now," "Go," and "Offer." It was a call to immediate action.
 - God repeats the personal pronoun "you/your" three times to make it clear who was to take this action.
 - Before Abraham could sacrifice Isaac, he had to sacrifice his own will.

Isaac Was Involved In The Test

- What would have happened to Isaac if Abraham had sacrificed him?
- What would have happened to Isaac if Abraham had refused to sacrifice him? Which choice was in Isaac's best interest?
- What did happen to Isaac?
- What would have been the impact on all subsequent generations, including us?
- Do you understand that your choice to pass or fail a test will greatly impact others?

Isaac Was Involved In The Test

- Isaac was not a helpless infant; he was old enough that he had the choice to trust his father.
- Isaac had received no instructions from God, but he fully submitted to his father
 - Gen. 18:19 - “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

Isaac Was Involved In The Test

- We know what Abraham was thinking.
 - Heb. 11:17-19 - “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, In Isaac your seed shall be called, 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”
- But Isaac would have to simply trust his father.

The Test Foreshadows God's Sacrifice Of Jesus

- Both Isaac and Jesus were “only begotten” sons
- John 3:16
- Both were beloved sons - Gen. 22:2; Matt. 3:17
- Both were offered by their fathers who loved them - John 3:16

The Test Foreshadows God's Sacrifice Of Jesus

- Both sons submitted to being sacrificed without protest
 - John 10:18 - “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”
 - Luke 22:42 - “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

The Test Foreshadows God's Sacrifice Of Jesus

- Both were required by their fathers to carry the burden on their back.
 - Isaac carried the wood for the altar - Gen. 22:6
 - Jesus carried the wood of the cross and the sins of the world - John 19:17; Isa. 53:6

The Test Foreshadows God's Sacrifice Of Jesus

- Both were sacrificed in the region of Moriah - Gen. 22:2
 - Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem, a city on mount Moriah - 2Chron. 2:21
- Both Isaac and Jesus returned to their fathers' house after the sacrifice - Gen. 22:19; Heb. 1:3

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- As Abraham was called out from among his people to walk with God, Christians are called out of the world to walk with God.
 - Ekklesia - "Those who have been called out"
 - 2Cor. 6:17 - "Therefore Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."
 - John 17:14-18 - "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- Like Abraham, Christians are called on to leave surrender all that we have in the world that will keep us from our pilgrimage with God
 - Heb. 12:1 - “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- Noah left everyone except his godly wife and children. He was saved
- Abraham left his idolatrous relatives to walk with God. He was saved
- Lot's wife could not leave some of her family and her home in Sodom. She was lost
- Israel wanted to return to Egypt when the Exodus became difficult. They were lost - Num. 14

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- The key to success is to forget what we left behind
 - Phil. 3:13-14 - “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- Once we have made the commitment to Christ, we must never look back
 - Luke 18:28-30 - “Then Peter said, See, we have left all and followed You. 29 So He said to them, Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”
 - Luke 9:62 - “But Jesus said to him, No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- Just as Abraham was required to sacrifice, so are we.
 - Rom. 12:1 - “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- Luke 9:23-26 - “Then He said to them all, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.”

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- When God requires us to sever earthly ties and follow Him, He is asking if we really want to be heirs of a home in heaven
 - Matt. 10:37 - “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

Abraham's Test Is A Type Of Our Test

- After the time of testing, God always delivers on His promises
 - Mark 10:29-30 - “So Jesus answered and said, Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.”