





Abraham's Journey from Ur to Canaan
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Abraham's Faith

Genesis 22



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It was not a small trial to Abraham to be called to leave his home and acquaintances and go into a land that he knew not. When he came into that land, he found that the Canaanites were there, and he would have all their idolatry to meet.

This was a severe trial to Abraham's faith. He could not see any possession that he could claim as his own.

But in his perplexity the God of heaven condescended to preach the gospel to him and show him the possession that he should have for an eternal inheritance. (*4LtMs*, Ms 19, 1886, par. 1, 2)

God promised to Abraham and his seed after him that they should have possessions and lands, and yet they were only strangers and sojourners. The inheritance and lands which are to be given not only to Abraham but to the children of Abraham **will not be until after this earth is purified**. Abraham will then receive the title to his farm, his possessions, and the children of Abraham will have a title to their possessions. Every one of us should constantly bear in mind that this earth is not our dwelling place, but that we are to have an inheritance in the earth made new. (*4LtMs*, Ms 19a, 1886, par. 5)

There are sermons preached in order to excuse God and make it all right on His side that He should require this offering of Abraham. Now all these discourses imply a question whether God should require this of Abraham. God has a right to every one of us, and it is not for any one to question whether it is right, whether God should take this course or that course with us. Those that have perfect confidence in the Lord God of heaven will never question any of His dealing with His children. He has important experiences to give His children, and He gives them this experience in His own way. 4LtMs,

Ms 19, 1886, par. 16

Now Abraham verily believed and made the sacrifice to all intents and purposes in his heart.

And that very faith is counted to him for righteousness. He thought and taught to Isaac that God was able to raise him up from the dead and could see the end from the beginning. This is the very faith that we should have, every one of us, in the Lord God of heaven. We have the history of Abraham, and the ground the Lord brought him over, in order to give us strength and courage and faith. The Lord wants every one of us to believe that He is the very best friend we have. Here was Abraham that trusted God at every step, and his faith was perfect. (*4LtMs*, Ms 19, 1886, par. 16)

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. (Hebrews 11:17–19)

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (Galatians 3:7)

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:9)

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith. (Galatians 3:11)

But the just shall live by his faith. (Habakkuk 2:4)

And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

(Galatians 3:12–14)

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. (Acts 2:33)

And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (James 2:20–24)

And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

–*Genesis 22:2*

Again the Lord saw fit to test the faith of Abraham by a most fearful trial. If he had endured the first test, and had patiently waited for the promise to be fulfilled in Sarah, and had not taken Hagar as his wife, he would not have been subjected to the closest test that was ever required of man. The Lord bade Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”

– *ISP* 98.3

Abraham did not disbelieve God, and hesitate, but early in the morning he took two of his servants, and Isaac his son, and the wood for the burnt-offering, and went unto the place of which God had told him. He did not reveal the true nature of his journey to Sarah, knowing that her affection for Isaac would lead her to distrust God, and withhold her son. Abraham did not suffer paternal feelings to control him, and lead him to rebel against God. The command of God was calculated to stir the depths of his soul. "Take now thy son." Then, as though to probe the heart a little deeper, he adds, "thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest;" that is, the only son of promise, "and offer him as a burnt-offering."

– *ISP* 99.1

Three days this father traveled with his son, having sufficient time to reason, and doubt God if he was disposed to doubt. But he did not distrust God. He did not now reason that the promise would be fulfilled through Ishmael; for God plainly told him that through Isaac should the promise be fulfilled.

– *ISP 99.2*

Abraham believed that Isaac was the son of promise. He also believed that God meant just what he said when he bade him to go offer him as a burnt-offering. He staggered not at the promise of God; but believed that God, who had in his providence given Sarah a son in her old age, and who had required him to take that son's life, could also give life again, and bring up Isaac from the dead. (*ISP* 99.3)

Hebrews 11:19

As they came to the place which God had pointed out to Abraham, he builds there an altar, and lays the wood in order, ready for the sacrifice, and then informs Isaac of the command of God to offer him as a burnt-offering. He repeats to him the promise that God several times made to him that through Isaac he should become a great nation, and that in performing the command of God in slaying him, God would fulfill his promise; for he was able to raise him from the dead.

– *ISP* 100.1

Isaac believed in God. He had been taught implicit obedience to his father, and he loved and revered the God of his father. He could have resisted his father if he had chosen to do so. But after affectionately embracing his father, he submitted to be bound and laid upon the wood. And as his father's hand is raised to slay his son, an angel of God who had marked all the faithfulness of Abraham on the way to Moriah, calls to him out of Heaven, and says, "Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

– *ISP* 100.2

At the time of receiving this command, Abraham had reached the age of a hundred and twenty years. He was regarded as an old man, even in his generation.

In his earlier years he had been strong to endure hardship and to brave danger, but now the ardor of his youth had passed away. One in the vigor of manhood may with courage meet difficulties and afflictions that would cause his heart to fail later in life, when his feet are faltering toward the grave. But

God had reserved His last, most trying test for Abraham until **the burden of years was heavy upon him**, and he longed for rest from anxiety and toil.

– *PP* 147.3

The patriarch was dwelling at Beersheba, surrounded by prosperity and honor. He was very rich, and was honored as a mighty prince by the rulers of the land. Thousands of sheep and cattle covered the plains that spread out beyond his encampment. On every side were the tents of his retainers, the home of hundreds of faithful servants. The son of promise had grown up to manhood by his side. Heaven seemed to have crowned with its blessing a life of sacrifice in patient endurance of hope deferred.

– *PP 147.4*

Satan was at hand to suggest that he must be deceived, for the divine law commands, “Thou shalt not kill,” and God would not require what He had once forbidden. Going outside his tent, Abraham looked up to the calm brightness of the unclouded heavens, and recalled the promise made nearly fifty years before, that his seed should be innumerable as the stars. If this promise was to be fulfilled through Isaac, how could he be put to death? Abraham was tempted to believe that he might be under a delusion. In his doubt and anguish he bowed upon the earth, and prayed, as he had never prayed before, **for some confirmation** of the command if he must perform this terrible duty.

He remembered the angels sent to reveal to him God's purpose to destroy Sodom, and who bore to him the promise of this same son Isaac, and he went to the place where he had several times met the heavenly messengers, hoping to meet them again, and receive some further direction; **but none came to his relief.** Darkness seemed to shut him in; but the command of God was sounding in his ears, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." That command must be obeyed, and he dared not delay. Day was approaching, and he must be on his journey.

– *PP* 148.3

Abraham's great act of faith stands like a pillar of light, illuminating the pathway of God's servants **in all succeeding ages**. Abraham did not seek to excuse himself from doing the will of God. During that three days' journey he had sufficient time to reason, and to doubt God, if he was disposed to doubt. He might have reasoned that the slaying of his son would cause him to be looked upon as a murderer, a second Cain; that it would cause his teaching to be rejected and despised; and thus destroy his power to do good to his fellow men.

– *PP* 153.3

He might have pleaded that age should excuse him from obedience. But the patriarch did not take refuge in any of these excuses. Abraham was human; his passions and attachments were like ours; but he did not stop to question how the promise could be fulfilled if Isaac should be slain. He did not stay to reason with his aching heart. **He knew that God is just and righteous in all His requirements, and he obeyed the command to the very letter.**

– *PP 153.3*

“Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.” James 2:23. And Paul says, “They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”

Galatians 3:7. **But Abraham’s faith was made manifest by his works.** “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?”

James 2:21, 22. There are many who fail to understand the relation of faith and works. They say, “Only believe in Christ, and you are safe. You have nothing to do with keeping the law.” But genuine faith will be manifest in obedience.

What should we do if it were not for these representative men that are presented before us, and the dealing of God with them? Our lines are not to be always cast in pleasant places. We shall be brought where we shall feel the test and proof of God. If we could know the history of everyone that is here in this house today, there would be some valuable experiences brought out where they followed the leadings of God irrespective of inclination. The God of heaven will test us to see if we appreciate the favor of God and believe His promises and will rely upon them irrespective of consequences.

– *4LtMs*, Ms 19, 1886, par. 18

Why this test of
faith?

It was to impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man's redemption. No other test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. (*PP* 154.2)

The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no voice to cry, “It is enough.” To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life. What stronger proof can be given of the infinite compassion and love of God? “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32. (*PP* 154.2)

The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his own good, nor solely for the benefit of succeeding generations; but it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds. The field of the controversy between Christ and Satan — the field on which the plan of redemption is wrought out — is the lesson book of the universe. Because Abraham had shown a lack of faith in God's promises, Satan had accused him before the angels and before God of having failed to comply with the conditions of the covenant, and as unworthy of its blessings. God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted, and to open more fully before them the plan of salvation. (*PP* 154.3)

- To impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel
- To test his faith
- To understand something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by God for man's redemption

- To benefit succeeding generations
- For the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds
- To prove his loyalty before all heaven
- To demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted
- To open more fully before sinless intelligences the plan of salvation

The Consequences

- All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unfaltering obedience.
- All heaven applauded his fidelity.
- Satan's accusations were shown to be false.
- Showed that obedience will be rewarded
- Angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man's salvation.

The Final Test

- The believer has a final test: “Day by day God works with him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the time of **final test**. And day by day the believer is working out before men and angels a sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings” (*AA* 483.1).
- The close of probation has a final test: “It is in a crisis that character is revealed. . . . a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The **great final test** comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul’s need to be supplied” (*COL* 412.1).

- Saul had a final test—“This victory over the Amalekites was the most brilliant victory that Saul had ever gained, and it served to rekindle the pride of heart that was his greatest peril. The divine edict devoting the enemies of God to utter destruction was but partially fulfilled. . . . Saul had now been subjected to the final test. His presumptuous disregard of the will of God, showing his determination to rule as an independent monarch, proved that he could not be trusted with royal power as the vicegerent of the Lord” (*PP* 629).

- The Jewish leaders had a final test — “They hated His example of truthfulness and piety and the elevated spirituality revealed in all He did. His whole life was a reproof to their selfishness, and when the **final test** came, the test which meant obedience unto eternal life or disobedience unto eternal death, they rejected the Holy One of Israel” (*COL 293.3*).

- Peter had a final test—“Peter had failed when the test came, but again he was to have opportunity to prove his love for Christ. That he might be strengthened for the **final test** of his faith, the Saviour opened to him his future” (*DA* 815.3).

- The great controversy and God's people have a final test—“As Christ was glorified on the day of Pentecost, so will He again be glorified in the closing work of the gospel, when He shall prepare a people to stand the **final test**, in the closing conflict of the great controversy” (*RH*, November 29, 1892, par. 3).
- The world has a final test: “The **final test** has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received ‘the seal of the living God’” (*FLB* 339.2)

- The Sabbath is the final test: “The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the **final test** shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. (*GC 605.2*)

Angels Are Watching

- Day by day God works with him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the time of final test. And day by day the believer is working out **before men and angels** a sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings. (AA 483.1)