

# THE ULTIMATE TEST—FOR GOD!

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Remember the Titanic? The newspapers proclaimed it unsinkable. But on its maiden voyage from England to the United States, it was sunk by an iceberg that didn't read the papers! The lesson we learn from this is that a ship is only as good as the worst test or storm that it has endured. We are a lot like ships, in our journey to the New Jerusalem.

One of the chief ships of faith in the Hebrew Scriptures is the Binding of Isaac by his father Abraham because it speaks to us of a test powerful enough to separate a father, from the son that he loves (Genesis 22:1-14). In that span of time, when Isaac was bound, until the knife was poised over his throat to rip it open, both father and son lived an eternity...in Death. Both exemplify total surrender to God: death to self. Both willingly laid down their lives.

Did Isaac have any choice? How old was Isaac? Most think he was only a child. This comes from a faulty translation of the Hebrew noun *nah'ar* נַחֲרָא (Gen. 22:5, 12), which can be translated 'lad or boy,' but in this context, it would be better translated as 'young man.' The word that is used for Abraham's servants, the ones he leaves in charge of all the supplies and the donkeys at the bottom of the mountain is also *nah'ar*, (Gen. 22:3, 5, 19) only in the plural. Now, if you know anything about boys and donkeys, it would have been quite a scene if Abraham had two five year old boy servants and left them in charge of the donkeys at the bottom of the mountain!

The word *nah'ar* would be translated better 'young man' for Isaac. Many get their picture of Isaac's age from the paintings of the Renaissance, but the artists weren't there. The Rabbis say that Isaac was between 25 and 30. But those Rabbis didn't know the Messiah of Israel. I think Isaac was the exact age to the day, of Yeshua our Messiah, when Yeshua was sacrificed for us, by His Father.

This scene of Mt. Moriah is a perfect picture of what God will do with His Son, 2,000 years later, on another nearby hill. Isaac, like Jesus, carries the wood up the mountain (Genesis 22:6; John 19:17). Isaac allows his father to not only bind him without a struggle, but never once do the Scriptures record that he even spoke to try and dissuade his father. Isaiah 53:7 states of Messiah that, 'as a lamb led to the slaughter, as a sheep dumb before its shearers, He opened not His Mouth.' This applies to Isaac also.

Isaac allowed his father to bind him, not because his father was the authority in his life, but because he loved his father more than he loved his life; and his father was the authority in his life. Yeshua allowed His Father to bind him, not because His Father was the authority in His Life, but because He loved His Father more than He loved His Life; and His Father was the authority in His Life.

Abraham acted out this drama of death for 3 days and 3 nights (Gen. 22:4), not because God was the authority in his life, but because he loved God more than his most precious possession. And this Test would prove it, to Abraham. God knew what Abraham would do. This is a faith, so perfect; this is a trust, so strong; this is a two, so one; that even the angels in Heaven must have looked down upon this scene in awe!, for here were two men acting as if God were real. This is a perfect picture of life in the Kingdom of Yeshua: total yieldedness to God, obedience, trust, faith and oneness. When all the plugs of their understanding were pulled out, they still trusted and obeyed God!

How much does God love you? Picture yourself in prison awaiting execution for crimes that are punishable by death. As you are being led away by the guards, the procession is halted by the one who has sentenced you, the judge. He tells you that his love for you is so great, that he and his son have agreed

that his son will take your place. How can this be?! The one that Judges us is also our Savior (Gen. 18:25; Is. 33:22; Acts 10:42; 2nd Tim. 4:1. Psalm 106:21; Is. 43:3, 11; Phil. 3:20).

Why was Messiah Yeshua crucified? Could not God have devised a million other ways of Salvation for Israel much less painful to His Son, than the humiliating and painful beating and then crucifixion? Of course He could have. But so that you and I could see how much God really loves us, more than His most precious possession, His Son Jesus.

Focusing on the Hebrew verb *lir-rote*, which means ‘to see,’ we’re going to see how the Author of Genesis 22, the Spirit of the Holy One, has interwoven this verb into the very theological fabric of the text. The word Moriah (Gen. 22:2), the Mountain where the sacrifice was to be performed, is a derivative of the verb ‘to see.’ Moriah literally means, ‘Yahveh is seen’ (appears or manifests), the Hebrew being *ha-moe-ree-yah*.

Genesis 22:8 has Abraham answering Isaac’s question about where the lamb was. Abraham says, ‘God will provide the lamb’ or literally, ‘God will see to it’ (or ‘to him’ as there is no ‘it’ in the Hebrew; *El-lo-heem yir-eh-low*). Genesis 22:13 has the Hebrew word giving us the plain meaning of ‘to see’ and describes what Abraham saw: God’s Provision *vah-yar*: ‘Then lifting his eyes, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in the thicket.’ This culminates in verse 14 as the sentence is broken into two parts, each of which picks up the two different meanings of the verb, ‘to see:’ God will see to it (or provide) and God will be seen: ‘And Abraham called the name of that place Yahveh yir-eh; Yahveh will see to him or provide him. This is a direct reference back to both verse 8, where Isaac asks where the lamb for the sacrifice is, and verse 13, where the lamb is actually seen or provided.

You and I are all ‘in’ Isaac. If he dies there are no Jews. If no Jews then no one for Messiah Yeshua to come through. If no Yeshua then no salvation for mankind. This is one of those extremely critical times in history where every life that will ever live hangs in the balance. The crucifixion of Yeshua is the other.

Continuing with verse 14: ‘as it is said today, ‘in the Mountain Yahveh *yar’ae*—Yahveh will be seen! (will appear/manifest). The King James Version comes close when it translates this as, ‘in the mountain of the Lord, it shall be seen,’ but leaves one wondering what the *it* that will be seen is. Is it the lamb or God? The provision or the Provider? Or is it one and the same thing?!

I think that what we see here is a direct reference back to verse 2, Mount Moriah, which means, ‘Yahveh is seen.’ The Holy Spirit is giving us a profound theological insight: When God is seen, appears or manifests provision is always made, but where did God manifest Himself in those first fourteen verses of Genesis 22. Where was God seen? (No, it’s not the ram-lamb although it does picture Yeshua as the Lamb of God.)

The Angel of the Lord that stops the sacrifice from taking place is Yeshua the Messiah (God manifest). A terrible translation in our English texts is the Hebrew word translated as *Angel* of the Lord, which is *mahl-ahch*. Now, this word can be translated as *angel*, but in this case it should be translated as ‘messenger.’ Now usually, messengers from God are angels, but this Messenger is not an angel. What angel would ever say in verse 12, ‘Do not stretch forth your hand to the young man and don’t do anything (to harm him) for now I know that you fear God, for you have not withheld your son, your unique one, *from Me*.’

A messenger is someone sent with a message. Yeshua uses this concept to describe Himself as ‘the Sent One’ 39 times in the Book of John.<sup>1</sup> This, the Sent One from God, paralleling Moses, was a very powerful Messianic title He laid claim to (Malachi 3:1). Hebrews 3:1 says that Yeshua is ‘the *Apostle* and High

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<sup>1</sup> John 3:34; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 36, 37, 38; 6:29, 38, 39, 44, 57; 7:16, 28, 29, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44-45, 49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21 (also, Heb. 3:1).

Priest of our confession.’ *Apostle* means ‘sent one.’ That’s what a messenger is, a sent one.

Moriah is the place of sacrifice and Yahveh is both seen and sees to Him (Yeshua, our Provision), 2,000 years later, at the Tree. When we look upon Yeshua crucified, we see both the Father and the Son; the Provider and our Provision.

What an interweaving of the verb ‘to see’ by the Spirit of the Holy One! We see that God is seen and sees to it or provides, in the midst of this ultimate test, where two men lay down their God given agenda, to follow God! It made no sense to either man: God had promised Abraham a son and through Isaac the Covenant would be realized. To sacrifice Isaac was not what they pictured as part of their blessings.

Why was Jesus crucified? There could have been a million other ways much less painful to God and His Son than the humiliating beating and crucifixion. It was done so that you and I could see how much God the Father and God the Son love us. And to see the Way of Life in the Kingdom of Yeshua: total surrender to God, death to self. We see that the highest form of faith is blind obedience, an obedience that obeys especially when it does not understand or see.

I hope you have been able to sense in a greater way, Papa-God’s love for you. You see, there was no harder test for Abraham than to offer up his son Isaac. It would have been easier if God had said to him, ‘I want you to rip out your own heart,’ than for Abraham to hear, ‘I want you to take your son, your unique one, whom you love, and offer him as a sacrifice.’

The reason why God had Abraham do that was because there was no harder test for God, to show His Love for you and for me, then to take His Son, His only Unique Son, the One whom He loves, and sacrifice Him for you and for me. We tend to think that God doesn’t have any feelings, but this is wrong. That’s why the test was arranged for Father Abraham. We can relate to Abraham as a human being giving up his son, much more so than to Papa God giving up His Son. What was torture for Abraham was also torture for Papa God. What Isaac thought and felt as he faced death, was also what Yeshua our Messiah went through, too.

This was the Ultimate Test for God Himself. To see His Son Yeshua beaten, spit upon, His Beard pulled out, His Face struck with the reed, His Back ripped open with the iron fish hooks attached to the Roman lashes, and then pierced to the tree; and not do anything to stop it! How Much Does God Love You? Look at Messiah Yeshua crucified for you! Taste His Love for you and be healed.

Now we know why the Binding of Isaac is one of the chief ships of faith in the Scriptures, and why Abraham is called the Father of both the Jew and the Gentile who believe and trust in Yeshua, as Abraham trusted. Remember the Titanic? A ship is only as good as the worst storm or test that it has passed through. This faith that we see displayed for us in Genesis 22 is the ‘ship’ that will carry us through the hardest tests of this life. This is the Work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We who believe in Jesus, are all children of Abraham. And God our Father, wants to take us to Mt. Moriah and offer us up there, that you might see God and His Provision, Yeshua. Will you let Him? Abraham knew God for more than 50 years before this test came to him. You may be in the midst of being tested right now. Turn to Yeshua, for He is your strength in this storm.

Like Father Abraham, I know what it is like to be tested. I know what it’s like to give God my most precious possessions. God asked for both my sons when they were 4 and 2 years old. And like Father Abraham, I would rather have tried to rip out my own heart, than to give up the sons that I love. I know what it’s like to be humiliated, beaten and crucified. It’s unbearable torture. I was pierced to the tree and I watched as my life blood slowly trickled out of me. No one rescued me for this was God’s Way of making me like Him: death to self, that He might live through me.

And I know what it's like to be dead. To be in the tomb. There's no light in the tomb, only thick darkness. There's no hope, symbolized by light, only deep despair. There's no life. In the tomb, Death reigns as King. And here I became intimately acquainted with Death and evil. My own evil. My own rebellion and stubbornness. For when someone hurts me, I want to hurt them back. Loving my enemy is the last thing I want to do. That's why I had to die, in order for the Life of Yeshua my Messiah, to live within me. That Yeshua, by His Spirit, would love my enemy.

One day, the Holy Spirit began to blow upon me. I knew it was the Lord, because I knew what was not the Lord. I have come to see God in His Son, Yeshua, in a way that I never had before. I've come to know the Heart of Papa-God for all His Children, both Jew and Gentile. I am as one raised from the dead, by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the Tender Love of Papa God to you. A love that triumphs over bitterness, hatred, resentment and evil. A love powerful enough, to separate a father, from the two sons he loves. Come to Messiah Yeshua now, for He desires to release you from slavery to bitterness and pain, and give you God's great Love. Like Isaac, give Him your heart.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Revised on 18 August 2016.