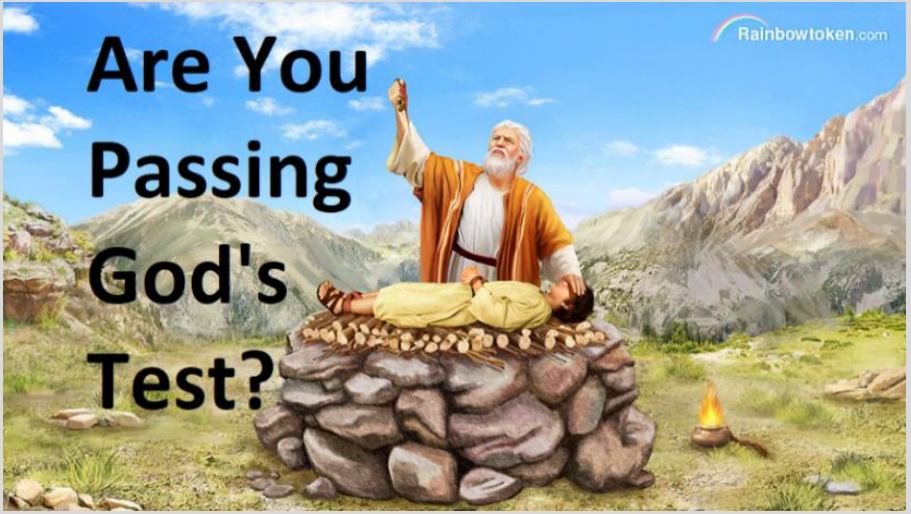


Are You Passing God's Test?



Saturday, 2/20 at 4:00 & Sunday, 2/21 at 9:00

First Sunday in Lent – 2021

Lenten Wednesdays: Services at 11 & 7

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: When we face a test of any kind, it is easy to **SAY** we have **the answers** or **the physical ability** or **whatever the test is requiring**; however, **THE PROOF OF WHAT WE SAY is brought to light in the passing of the test!** Now, Abraham's HUGE test...

- A Huge Test:** ^{NAU} **Genesis 22:1** Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take now your son, your **only son**, whom you **love**, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." // The command was SO HUGE and SO HORRIBLE – **take** your only son born to Sarah – *your promised heir*, **go** to a particular place, **kill** him, and **burn** him! If God commanded YOU to do that, how would YOU respond?

2. **Abraham Demonstrated His Trust in God:** ³ So Abraham rose **early** in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split **wood** for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. ⁵ Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey, and **I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.**” // Why was Abraham so confident – both **go**, both **return**? Earlier the LORD had told Abraham that, *through Isaac*, his descendants would be as many as the stars (*Gen. 15:5*), so Isaac **must live to have children, even if God must raise him from the dead!** What is your view of God’s promises – maybe **or** certain?
3. **Abraham Knew God Would Provide:** ⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. ⁷ Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but **where is the lamb for the burnt offering?**” ⁸ Abraham said, “**God will provide** for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. // “**God will provide...**” ♦Easy to say, ♦not easy to believe, and ♦quite difficult to FIRMLY trust in God to the extent that *we move through every circumstance of life with God’s perfect peace!* Is that possible? Yes! How do we get there? With baby steps... as we keep ♦learning God’s will and ♦putting it into practice – *especially doing so when God’s will disagrees with our human reason.* Did God’s command make sense to Abraham? Not at all! Did Abraham do it without hesitating? Yes he did!

4. **Abraham Passed the Test:** ⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham **built** the altar there and **arranged** the wood, and **bound** his son Isaac and **laid** him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Abraham stretched out his hand and **took** the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹² He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

a. **From God’s command to the raised knife of Abraham, did Abraham ever question God or hesitate to do His will?** If he did, the Bible contains no hint. Instead, ♦from the command ♦to the very moment before the FINAL EXECUTION OF THE PLAN, Abraham ♦obediently and ♦quickly moved forward! We could say that Abraham was COMPLETELY FOCUSED ON GOD’S WILL and COMPLETELY IGNORED HIS OWN HUMAN REASON! Though not yet written, he lived Proverbs 3:5: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding” (NAU).

b. At the final moment, the angel of the LORD – *that is, the Son of God* – told Abraham to **STOP**, and he did! Remember, *that was a test*, the kind where you keep going ♦to COMPLETION or ♦until God says to **STOP**! Since God said **GO**, only God could rightly say **STOP**!

5. **God’s Provision:** ¹³ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place **The LORD**

Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.” // In place of Isaac, *the LORD provided a ram*; in place of us, *the LORD provided Jesus* – our sinless sacrifice, *through whom God has made us sinless in His sight!* The LORD will always provide, so let us always 📍look to Him, 📍trust in Him, and 📍rest in Him!

6. **God’s Blessings:** ¹⁵ Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶ and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed **My voice.**” // **Blessed words** and **promised actions** came 📍*upon* Abraham and 📍*through* Abraham to others – because he obeyed. So how should we understand faith and obedience? In **Gen. 15**, the LORD declared Abraham to be righteous – *because of His faith*. Then, in **Gen. 22**, *his faith was proven to be legit by his obedience!*

Conclusion:

- **Truth** – God’s commands are best, *even when difficult!*
- **Relevance** – God will provide, *so no worries!*
- **Inspiration** – Obey God, *rather than my human reason!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, help us to 📍embrace Your tests, 📍be obedient to Your commands, and 📍grow in our trust!