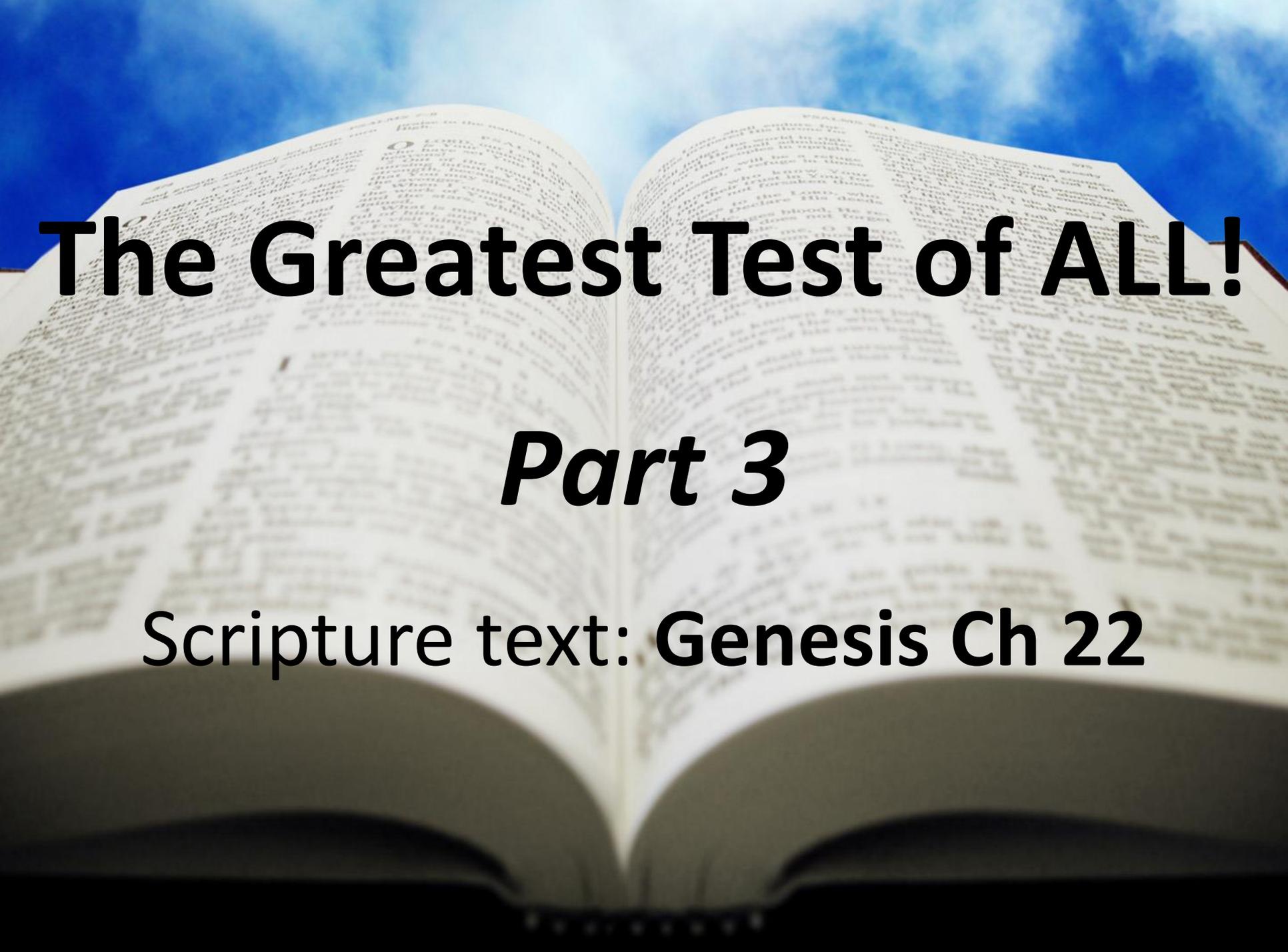


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# **The Greatest Test of ALL!**

## ***Part 3***

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 22**

**Genesis 22 records the greatest test that Abraham ever faced.** True, it also presents a beautiful picture of our Lord's sacrifice at Calvary; but **the main lesson is obedient faith that overcomes in the trials of life.** Abraham teaches us **how to face and handle the tests of life to the glory of God.** Consider five simple instructions.

- 1. Expect tests from God.**
- 2. Focus on promises, not explanations.**
- 3. Depend on God's provision (Gen. 22:6–14)**

## 4. Seek to glorify Christ

**In times of testing**, it is easy to think only about **our needs and our burdens**; instead, *we should be focusing on bringing glory to Jesus Christ*. We find ourselves asking “**How can I get out of this?**” instead of “**What can I get out of this that will honor the Lord?**” We sometimes *waste our sufferings by neglecting or ignoring opportunities to reveal Jesus Christ to others who are watching us go through the furnace.*

If ever two suffering people revealed Jesus Christ, it was Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah. *Their experience is a picture of the Father and the Son and the cross and is one of the most beautiful types of Christ found anywhere in the Old Testament.* Jesus said to the Jews, “Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56).

**John 8:56** Your father **Abraham** rejoiced that **he would see my day.** He saw it and was glad."

In Isaac's miraculous birth, **Abraham saw the day of Christ's birth;**

and in Isaac's marriage (Gen. 24), **he saw the day of Christ's coming for His bride.**

But on Mount Moriah, when Isaac willingly put himself on the altar, **Abraham saw the day of Christ's death and resurrection.**

Several truths about the atonement are seen in this event.

## **The Father and Son acted together.**

The touching phrase “**they went both of them together**” is found twice in the narrative (22:6, 8). In our evangelistic witness, we often emphasize the Father’s love for lost sinners (John 3:16) and the Son’s love for those for whom He died (1 John 3:16), but we fail to mention that the Father and the Son love each other. Jesus Christ is the Father’s “beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17), and the Son said, “But that the world may know that I love the Father” (John 14:31). Abraham did not withhold his son (Gen. 22:16), and the Father did not spare His Son but “delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32).

**The Son had to die.** Abraham carried a knife and a torch, both of them instruments of death. The knife would end Isaac's physical life, and the fire would burn the wood on the altar where his body lay. **In Isaac's case, a substitute died for him;** but *nobody could take the place of Jesus on the cross.* He was the only sacrifice that could finally and completely take away the sins of the world. God provided a ram, but Isaac had asked about a lamb. The answer to the question, "**Where is the lamb?**" was given by John the Baptist: "**Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29).

In the Bible, fire often symbolizes the holiness of God (Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29). **The cross was the physical instrument of death; but at Calvary, Jesus experienced much more than death. He experienced the judgment of God for the sins of the world.** Isaac felt neither the knife nor the fire, but **Jesus felt both**. Isaac's loving father was right there, but Jesus was forsaken by His Father when He became sin for us (Matt. 27:45–46; 2 Cor. 5:21). **What marvelous love!**

**Deuteronomy 4:24** For the LORD **your God is a consuming fire**, a jealous God.

**Deuteronomy 9:3** Know therefore today that he who goes over before you **as a consuming fire is the LORD your God**. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as **the LORD has promised you**.

**Hebrews 12:29** for our God is a consuming fire.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so *that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Matthew 27:45-46** Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**"

## **The Son bore the burden of sin.**

It is interesting that the wood is mentioned five times in the narrative and that *Isaac did not start carrying the wood until he arrived at Mount Moriah*. The wood is not a picture of the cross, for Jesus did not carry His cross all the way to Calvary. **The wood seems to picture the burden of sin that Jesus bore for us** (1 Peter 2:24). Abraham took the wood and ***“laid it upon Isaac his son”*** (Gen. 22:6), and **“the Lord hath laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all”** (Isa. 53:6). **The *fire consumed the wood as a picture of the judgment of God against sin.***

# **The Son was raised from the dead.**

Isaac did not actually die, but “in a figurative sense” he died and was raised from the dead. Jesus, however, really died, was buried, and was triumphantly resurrected. It is interesting that Abraham returned to the two servants, but nothing is said about Isaac. In fact, Isaac is not mentioned again until he is seen meeting his bride (24:62). While it is obvious that Isaac did return home with his father, the Bible type reminds us that the **next event** on God’s calendar is **the return of Jesus Christ to claim His bride, the church.**

**Hebrews 11:17-19** By faith Abraham, when he was **tested**, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "**Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.**" He considered that **God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, **figuratively speaking**, he did receive him back.

The greatest thing that can happen as we experience the trials God sends is that we grow closer to our Father and become more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Calvary is not only the place where Jesus died for our sins, but it is also the place **where He sanctified suffering** and, by His resurrection, transformed suffering into glory. Seek to glorify the Lord, and He will do the rest.*

Said Martin Luther: “Our suffering is not worthy [of] the name of suffering. When I consider my crosses, tribulations, and temptations, I shame myself almost to death, thinking what they are in comparison of the sufferings of my blessed Savior Christ Jesus.”

## 5. Look forward to what God has for you (Gen. 22:15–24)

There is always an “**afterward**” to the tests of life (Heb. 12:11; 1 Peter 5:10), because God **never wastes suffering**.

***Job 23:10** But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.*

Abraham received several blessings from God because of his obedient faith.

**Hebrews 12:11** For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but **later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** to those **who have been trained by it.**

**1 Peter 5:10** And **after you have suffered a little while,** the God of all grace, **who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ,** will himself **restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.**

To begin with, **he received a new approval from God** (Gen. 22:12). Abraham had described this whole difficult experience as “**worship**” (22:5) because, to him, that is what it was. **He obeyed God’s will and sought to please God’s heart**, and God commended him. *It is worth it to go through trials if, at the end, the Father can say to us, “Well done!”*

**He received back a new son.** Isaac and Abraham had been at the altar together, and Isaac was now a “**living sacrifice**” (Rom. 12:1–2). God gave Isaac to Abraham, and Abraham gave Isaac back to God. **We must be careful that God’s gifts do not take the place of the Giver.**

**Genesis 22:5** Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; **I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.**"

**Genesis 22:11-12** But the **angel of the LORD** called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, **for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.**"

**Romans 12:1-2** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, **which is your spiritual worship**. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, **that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

**God gave Abraham new assurances (Gen. 22:16–18).**

He had heard these promises before, **but now they took on fresh new meaning.**

Charles Spurgeon used to say that **the promises of God never shine brighter than in the furnace of affliction.** What two men did on a lonely altar would one day bring blessing to the whole world!

**Abraham also learned a new name for God  
(22:14).**

As we have seen, Jehovah-jireh means “the Lord will be seen” or “the Lord will see to it [provide].” The Jewish temple was built on Mount Moriah (2 Chron. 3:1); and during our Lord’s earthly ministry, He was seen there. He was the true Lamb of God, provided by God to die for the sins of the world.

The founder of the China Inland Mission (now the Overseas Missionary Fellowship), **J. Hudson Taylor**, used to hang in his home a plaque with two Hebrew words on it: **“Ebenezer”** and **“Jehovah-jireh.”**

**They mean:** “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. 7:12) and “The Lord will see to it.” Whether he looked back or ahead, Hudson Taylor knew **the Lord was at work, and he had nothing to fear.**

**When he arrived back home, Abraham heard another new name—Rebekah (Gen. 22:23)—the girl God was saving for Isaac.**

The roll call of the names of Abraham's brother's family could have discouraged a man with only one son, but **Abraham did not fret.** After all, he had God's promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore! (22:17)

**Finally, Abraham came away from this trial with a deeper love for the Lord.**

Jesus tells us about this deeper love in:

**John 14:23-24** Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And **the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.**

Paul prays about love in: **Ephesians 3:14-19** For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you **to be strengthened with power through his Spirit** in your inner being, so **that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love**, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

# **Lessons we can learn and must learn:**

- 1. Expect tests from God.**
- 2. Focus on promises, not explanations.**
- 3. Depend on God's provision.**
- 4. Seek to glorify Christ.**
- 5. Look forward to what God has for you.**