
GENESIS 22:1 After these things, God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" He said, "Here I am."

The faith and obedience of Abraham put to a most extraordinary test, Gen 22:1. He is commanded to offer his beloved son Isaac for a burnt-offering, Gen 22:2. He prepares, with the utmost promptitude, to accomplish the will of God, Gen 22:3-6. Affecting speech of Isaac, Gen 22:7; and Abraham's answer, Gen 22:8. Having arrived at mount Moriah he prepares to sacrifice his son, Gen 22:9, Gen 22:10; and is prevented by an angel of the Lord, Gen 22:11, Gen 22:12. A ram is offered in the stead of Isaac, Gen 22:13; and the place is named Jehovah-jireh, Gen 22:14. The angel of the Lord calls to Abraham a second time, Gen 22:15; and, in the most solemn manner, he is assured of innumerable blessings in the multiplication and prosperity of his seed, Gen 22:16-18. Abraham returns and dwells at Beer-sheba, Gen 22:19; hears that his brother Nahor has eight children by his wife Milcah, Gen 22:20; their names, Gen 22:21-23; and four by his concubine Reumah, Gen 22:24.

Verse 1

God did tempt Abraham - The original here is very emphatic: והאלהים נסה את אברהם *vehaelohim nissah eth Abraham*, "And the Elohim he tried this Abraham;" God brought him into such circumstances as exercised and discovered his faith, love, and obedience. Though the word tempt, from *tento*, signifies no more than to prove or try, yet as it is now generally used to imply a solicitation to evil, in which way God never tempts any man, it would be well to avoid it here. The Septuagint used the word *πειρασαε*, which signifies tried, pierced through; and Symmachus translates the Hebrew *נסה* *nissah* by *εδοξαζεν*, God glorified Abraham, or rendered him illustrious, supposing the word to be the same with *נס* *nas*, which signifies to glister with light, whence *נס* *nes*, an ensign or banner displayed. Thus then, according to him, the words should be understood: "God put great honor on Abraham by giving him this opportunity of showing to all successive ages the nature and efficacy of an unshaken faith in the power, goodness, and truth of God." The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the place thus: "And it happened that Isaac and Ishmael contended, and Ishmael said, I ought to be my father's heir, because I am his first-born; but Isaac said, It is more proper that I should be my father's heir, because I am the son of Sarah his wife, and thou art only the son of Hagar, my mother's slave. Then Ishmael answered, I am more righteous than thou, because I was circumcised when I was thirteen years of age, and if I had chosen, I could have prevented my circumcision; but thou wert circumcised when thou wert but eight days old, and if thou hadst had knowledge, thou wouldst probably not have suffered thyself to be circumcised. Then Isaac answered and said, Behold, I am now thirty-six years old, and if the holy and blessed God should require all my members, I would freely surrender them. These words were immediately heard before the Lord of the universe, and *מימרא דיי* *meimera daiya*, the Word of the Lord, did try Abraham." I wish once for all to remark, though the subject has been referred to before, that the Chaldee term *מימרא* *meimera*, which we translate word, is taken personally in some hundreds of places in the Targums. When the author, Jonathan, speaks of the Divine Being as doing or saying any thing, he generally represents him as performing the whole by his *meimera*, which he appears to consider, not as a speech or word spoken, but as a person quite distinct from the Most High. St. John uses the word *λογος* in precisely the same sense with the Targumists, Joh 1:1 (note); see the notes there, and see before on Gen 21:22 (note), and Gen 15:1 (note).

GENESIS 22:2 He said, "Now take your son, your only son, whom you love, even Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah. Offer him there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you of."

Verse 2

Take now thy son - Bishop Warburton's observations on this passage are weighty and important. "The order in which the words are placed in the original gradually increases the sense, and raises the passions higher and higher: Take now thy son, (rather, take I beseech thee נא na), thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac. Jarchi imagines this minuteness was to preclude any doubt in Abraham. Abraham desired earnestly to be let into the mystery of redemption; and God, to instruct him in the infinite extent of the Divine goodness to mankind, who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, let Abraham feel by experience what it was to lose a beloved son, the son born miraculously when Sarah was past child-bearing, as Jesus was miraculously born of a virgin. The duration, too, of the action, Gen 22:4, was the same as that between Christ's death and resurrection, both which are designed to be represented in it; and still farther not only the final archetypical sacrifice of the Son of God was figured in the command to offer Isaac, but the intermediate typical sacrifice in the Mosaic economy was represented by the permitted sacrifice of the ram offered up, Gen 22:13, instead of Isaac." See Dodd.

Only son - All that he had by Sarah his legal wife.

The land of Moriah - This is supposed to mean all the mountains of Jerusalem, comprehending Mount Gihon or Calvary, the mount of Sion and of Acra. As Mount Calvary is the highest ground to the west, and the mount of the temple is the lowest of the mounts, Mr. Mann conjectures that it was upon this mount Abraham offered up Isaac, which is well known to be the same mount on which our blessed Lord was crucified. Beer-sheba, where Abraham dwelt, is about forty-two miles distant from Jerusalem, and it is not to be wondered at that Abraham, Isaac, the two servants, and the ass laden with wood for the burnt-offering, did not reach this place till the third day; see Gen 22:4.

GENESIS 22:3 Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went to the place of which God had told him.

Verse 3

Two of his young men - Eliezer and Ishmael, according to the Targum.

Clave the wood - Small wood, fig and palm, proper for a burnt-offering - Targum.

GENESIS 22:4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place far off.

Verse 4

The third day - "As the number Seven," says Mr. Ainsworth, "is of especial use in Scripture because of the Sabbath day, Gen 2:2, so Three is a mystical number because of Christ's rising from the dead the third day, Mat 17:23; 1Cor 15:4; as he was crucified the third hour after noon, Mar 15:25 : and Isaac, as he was a figure of Christ, in being the only son of his father, and not spared but offered for a sacrifice, Rom 8:32, so in sundry particulars he resembled our Lord: the third day Isaac was to be offered up, so it was the third day in which Christ also was to be perfected, Luk 13:32; Isaac carried the wood for the burnt-offering, Gen 22:6, so Christ carried the tree whereon he died, Joh 19:17; the binding of Isaac, Gen 21:9, was also typical, so Christ was bound, Mat 27:2. "In the following remarkable cases this number also occurs. Moses desired to go three days' journey in the wilderness to sacrifice, Exo 5:3; and they traveled three days in it before they found water, Exo 15:22; and three days' journey the ark of the covenant went before them, to search out a resting place, Num 10:33; by the third day the people were to be ready to receive God's law, Exo 19:11; and after three days to pass over Jordan into Canaan, Jos 1:14; the third day Esther put on the apparel of the kingdom, Est 5:1; on the third day Hezekiah, being recovered from his illness, went up to the house of the Lord, 2Kgs 20:5; on the third day, the prophet said, God will raise us up and we shall live before him, Hos 6:2; and on the third day, as well as on the seventh, the unclean person was to purify himself, Num 19:12 : with many other memorable things which the Scripture speaks concerning the third day, and not without mystery. See Gen 40:12, Gen 40:13; Gen 42:17, Gen 42:18; Jon 1:17; Jos 2:16; unto which we may add a Jew's testimony in Bereshith Rabba, in a comment on this place: There are many Three Days mentioned in the Holy Scripture, of which one is the resurrection of the Messiah." - Ainsworth.

Saw the place afar off - He knew the place by seeing the cloud of glory smoking on the top of the mountain - Targum.

GENESIS 22:5 Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go yonder. We will worship, and come back to you."

Verse 5

I and the lad will go and come again - How could Abraham consistently with truth say this, when he knew he was going to make his son a burnt-offering? The apostle answers for him: By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac - accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure, Heb 11:17, Heb 11:19. He knew that previously to the birth of Isaac both he and his wife were dead to all the purposes of procreation; that his birth was a kind of life from the dead; that the promise of God was most positive, In Isaac shall thy seed be called, Gen 21:12; that this promise could not fail; that it was his duty to obey the command of his Maker; and that it was as easy for God to restore him to life after he had been a burnt-offering, as it was for him to give him life in the beginning. Therefore he went fully purposed to offer his son, and yet confidently expecting to have him restored to life again. We will go yonder and worship - perform a solemn act of devotion which God requires, and come again to you.

GENESIS 22:6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. He took in his hand the fire and the knife. They both went together.

Verse 6

Took the wood - and laid it upon Isaac - Probably the mountain-top to which they were going was too difficult to be ascended by the ass; therefore either the father or the son must carry the wood, and it was most becoming in the latter.

GENESIS 22:7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and said, "My father?" He said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Verse 7

Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb - Nothing can be conceived more tender, affectionate, and affecting, than the question of the son and the reply of the father on this occasion. A paraphrase would spoil it; nothing can be added without injuring those expressions of affectionate submission on the one hand, and dignified tenderness and simplicity on the other.

GENESIS 22:8 Abraham said, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they both went together.

Verse 8

My son, God will provide himself a lamb - Here we find the same obedient unshaken faith for which this pattern of practical piety was ever remarkable. But we must not suppose that this was the language merely of faith and obedience; the patriarch spoke prophetically, and referred to that Lamb of God which He had provided for himself, who in the fullness of time should take away the sin of the world, and of whom Isaac was a most expressive type. All the other lambs which had been offered from the foundation of the world had been such as Men chose and Men offered; but This was the Lamb which God had provided - emphatically, The Lamb Of God.

GENESIS 22:9 They came to the place which God had told him of. Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, on the wood.

Verse 9

And bound Isaac his son - If the patriarch had not been upheld by the conviction that he was doing the will of God, and had he not felt the most perfect confidence that his son should be restored even from the dead, what agony must his heart have felt at every step of the journey, and through all the circumstances of this extraordinary business? What must his affectionate heart have felt at the questions asked by his innocent and amiable son? What must he have suffered while building the altar, laying on the wood, binding his lovely son, placing him on the wood, taking the knife, and stretching out his hand to slay the child of his hopes? Every view we take of the subject interests the heart, and exalts the character of this father of the faithful. But has the character of Isaac been duly considered? Is not the consideration of his excellence lost in the supposition that he was too young

to enter particularly into a sense of his danger, and too feeble to have made any resistance, had he been unwilling to submit? Josephus supposes that Isaac was now twenty-five, (see the chronology on Gen 22:1 (note)); some rabbins that he was thirty-six; but it is more probable that he was now about thirty-three, the age at which his great Antitype was offered up; and on this medium I have ventured to construct the chronology, of which I think it necessary to give this notice to the reader. Allowing him to be only twenty-five, he might have easily resisted; for can it be supposed that an old man of at least one hundred and twenty-five years of age could have bound, without his consent, a young man in the very prime and vigor of life? In this case we cannot say that the superior strength of the father prevailed, but the piety, filial affection, and obedience of the son yielded. All this was most illustriously typical of Christ. In both cases the father himself offers up his only-begotten son, and the father himself binds him on the wood or to the cross; in neither case is the son forced to yield, but yields of his own accord; in neither case is the life taken away by the hand of violence; Isaac yields himself to the knife, Jesus lays down his life for the sheep.

GENESIS 22:10 Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to kill his son.

GENESIS 22:11 the LORD's angel called to him out of the sky, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" He said, "Here I am."

Verse 11

The angel of the Lord - The very person who was represented by this offering; the Lord Jesus, who calls himself Jehovah, Gen 22:16, and on his own authority renews the promises of the covenant. He was ever the great Mediator between God and man. See this point proved, Gen 15:7 (note).

GENESIS 22:12 He said, "Don't lay your hand on the boy, neither do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."

Verse 12

Lay not thine hand upon the lad - As Isaac was to be the representative of Jesus Christ's real sacrifice, it was sufficient for this purpose that in his own will, and the will of his father, the purpose of the immolation was complete. Isaac was now fully offered both by his father and by himself. The father yields up the son, the son gives up his life; on both sides, as far as will and purpose could go, the sacrifice was complete. God simply spares the father the torture of putting the knife to his son's throat. Now was the time when it might properly be said, "Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offering, and sacrifice for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure in them: then said the Angel of the Covenant, Lo! I come to do thy will, O God." Lay not thy hand upon the lad; an irrational creature will serve for the purpose of a representative sacrifice, from this till the fullness of time. But without this most expressive representation of the father offering his beloved, only-begotten son, what reference can such sacrifices be considered to have to the great event of the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ? Abraham, the most dignified, the most immaculate of all the patriarchs; Isaac, the true pattern of piety to God and filial obedience, may well represent God the Father so loving the world as to give his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sin of man. But the grand circumstances necessary to prefigure these important points could not be exhibited through the

means of any or of the whole brute creation. The whole sacrificial system of the Mosaic economy had a retrospective and prospective view, referring From the sacrifice of Isaac To the sacrifice of Christ; in the first the dawning of the Sun of righteousness was seen; in the latter, his meridian splendor and glory. Taken in this light (and this is the only light in which it should be viewed) Abraham offering his son Isaac is one of the most important facts and most instructive histories in the whole Old Testament. See farther on this subject, Gen 23:2 (note).

GENESIS 22:13 Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and saw that behind him was a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

GENESIS 22:14 Abraham called the name of that place the LORD Will Provide. As it is said to this day, "On the LORD's mountain, it will be provided."

Verse 14

Jehovah - jireh - יהוה יראה Yehovah-yireh, literally interpreted in the margin, The Lord will see; that is, God will take care that every thing shall be done that is necessary for the comfort and support of them who trust in him: hence the words are usually translated, The Lord will provide; so our translators, Gen 22:8, אלהים יראה Elohim yireh, God will provide; because his eye ever affects his heart, and the wants he sees his hand is ever ready to supply. But all this seems to have been done under a Divine Impulse, and the words to have been spoken prophetically; hence Houbigant and some others render the words thus: Dominus videbitur, the Lord shall be seen; and this translation the following clause seems to require, As it is said to this day, בהר יהוה יראה behar Yehovah yeraeh, On This Mount The Lord Shall Be Seen. From this it appears that the sacrifice offered by Abraham was understood to be a representative one, and a tradition was kept up that Jehovah should be seen in a sacrificial way on this mount. And this renders the opinion stated on Gen 22:1 more than probable, viz., that Abraham offered Isaac on that very mountain on which, in the fullness of time, Jesus suffered. See Bishop Warburton.

GENESIS 22:15 the LORD's angel called to Abraham a second time out of the sky,

GENESIS 22:16 and said, "I have sworn by myself, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son,

Verse 16

By myself have I sworn - So we find that the person who was called the angel of the Lord is here called Jehovah; See note on Gen 22:2. An oath or an appeal to God is, among men, an end to strife; as God could swear by no greater, he sware by himself: being willing more abundantly, says the apostle, to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, he confirmed it by an oath, that two immutable things, (his Promise and his Oath), in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. See Heb 6:13-18.

GENESIS 22:17 that I will bless you greatly, and I will multiply your seed greatly like the stars of the heavens, and like the sand which is on the seashore. Your seed will possess the gate of his enemies.

Verse 17

Shall possess the gate of his enemies - Instead of gate the Septuagint have *πολεις*, cities; but as there is a very near resemblance between *πολεις*, cities, and *πυλας*, gates, the latter might have been the original reading in the Septuagint, though none of the MSS. now acknowledge it. By the gates may be meant all the strength, whether troops, counsels, or fortified cities of their enemies. So Mat 16:18 : On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it - the counsels, stratagems, and powers of darkness shall not be able to prevail against or overthrow the true Church of Christ; and possibly our Lord had this promise to Abraham and his spiritual posterity in view, when he spoke these words.

GENESIS 22:18 All the nations of the earth will be blessed by your seed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Verse 18

And in thy seed, etc. - We have the authority of St. Paul, Gal 3:8, Gal 3:16, Gal 3:18, to restrain this to our blessed Lord, who was The Seed through whom alone all God's blessings of providence, mercy, grace, and glory, should be conveyed to the nations of the earth.

GENESIS 22:19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. Abraham lived at Beersheba.

GENESIS 22:20 After these things, it was told Abraham, saying, “Behold, Milcah, she also has borne children to your brother Nahor:

Verse 20

Behold, Milcah, she hath also borne children unto thy brother - This short history seems introduced solely for the purpose of preparing the reader for the transactions related Genesis 24, and to show that the providence of God was preparing, in one of the branches of the family of Abraham, a suitable spouse for his son Isaac.

GENESIS 22:21 Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram,

Verse 21

Huz - He is supposed to have peopled the land of Uz or Ausitis, in Arabia Deserta, the country of Job.

Buz his brother - From this person Elihu the Buzite, one of the friends of Job, is thought to have descended.

Kemuel the father of Aram - Kamouel πατερα Συρων, the father of the Syrians, according to the Septuagint. Probably the Kamiletes, a Syrian tribe to the westward of the Euphrates are meant; they are mentioned by Strabo.

GENESIS 22:22 Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.”

GENESIS 22:23 Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother.

Verse 23

Bethuel begat Rebekah - Who afterward became the wife of Isaac.

GENESIS 22:24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Verse 24

His concubine - We borrow this word from the Latin compound concubina, from con, together, and cubo, to lie, and apply it solely to a woman cohabiting with a man without being legally married. The Hebrew word is פִּלְגֶשֶׁת pilegesh, which is also a compound term, contracted, according to Parkhurst, from פָּלַג palag, to divide or share, and נָגַשׁ nagash, to approach; because the husband, in the delicate phrase of the Hebrew tongue, approaches the concubine, and shares the bed, etc., of the real wife with her. The pilegesh or concubine, (from which comes the Greek παλλακη pallake, and also the Latin pellex), in Scripture, is a kind of secondary wife, not unlawful in the patriarchal times; though the progeny of such could not inherit. The word is not used in the Scriptures in that disagreeable sense in which we commonly understand it. Hagar was properly the concubine or pilegesh of Abraham, and thus annuente Deo, and with his wife's consent. Keturah, his second wife, is called a concubine, Gen 26:15; 1Chr 1:32; and Pilhah and Zilhah were concubines to Jacob, Gen 35:22. After the patriarchal times many eminent men had concubines, viz., Caleb, 1Chr 2:46, 1Chr 2:48; Manasses, 1Chr 7:14; Gideon, Jdg 8:31; Saul, 2Sam 3:7; David, 2Sam 5:13; Solomon, 2Kgs 11:3; and Rehoboam, 2Chr 11:21. The pilegesh, therefore, differed widely from a prostitute; and however unlawful under the New Testament, was not so under the Old.

From this chapter a pious mind may collect much useful instruction. From the trial of Abraham we again see, 1. That God may bring his followers into severe straits and difficulties, that they may have the better opportunity of both knowing and showing their own faith and obedience; and that he may seize on those occasions to show them the abundance of his mercy, and thus confirm them in righteousness all their days. There is a foolish saying among some religious people, which cannot be too severely reprobated: Untried grace is no grace. On the contrary, there may be much grace, though God, for good reasons, does not think proper for a time to put it to any severe trial or proof. But grace is certainly not fully known but in being called to trials of severe and painful obedience. But as all the gifts of God should be used, (and they are increased and strengthened by exercise), it

would be unjust to deny trials and exercises to grace, as this would be to preclude it from the opportunities of being strengthened and increased. 2. The offering up of Isaac is used by several religious people in a sort of metaphorical way, to signify their easily-besetting sins, beloved idols, etc. But this is a most reprehensible abuse of the Scripture. It is both insolent and wicked to compare some abominable lust or unholy affection to the amiable and pious youth who, for his purity and excellence, was deemed worthy to prefigure the sacrifice of the Son of God. To call our vile passions and unlawful attachments by the name of our Isaac is unpardonable; and to talk of sacrificing such to God is downright blasphemy. Such sayings as these appear to be legitimated by long use; but we should be deeply and scrupulously careful not to use any of the words of God in any sense in which he has not spoken them. If, in the course of God's providence, a parent is called to give up to death an amiable, only son, then there is a parallel in the case; and it may be justly said, if pious resignation fill the parent's mind, such a person, like Abraham, has been called to give his Isaac back to God.

Independently of the typical reference to this transaction, there are two points which seem to be recommended particularly to our notice. 1. The astonishing faith and prompt obedience of the father. 2. The innocence, filial respect, and passive submission of the son. Such a father and such a son were alone worthy of each other.