

TRIALS, WORKS AND THEIR PURPOSE

Genesis 22: 1: And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am.* 2 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.

Abraham's only son is a picture of God's only begotten Son, Christ the Lamb. Like as this was the son Abraham loved, God said, '*This is my beloved son.*' Like as God commanded Moses to offer Isaac '*for a burnt offering*', Christ Jesus was chosen by God the Father to be God's offering for his people. All God's true Israel, God's elect, were guilty. God's law demanded we die. His justice must be upheld. So by Christ laying down his life God satisfied his own justice. God can show mercy to his elect Israel and remain just. He is a just God and a Savior!

So why was this believer, Abraham, given this trial? Wherever God gives true faith, God tries faith. It is to bring glory to God! By this work of obeying God, Abraham's faith was justified as being the genuine gift of God. We are in no way saved by our works. But works we do in the face of our total inability prove that our faith is given by God. It begins with bringing God the one sacrifice with which God is well-pleased, his own Son. Abraham knew God promised Christ would come through Isaac. He knew Christ was all his salvation and the salvation of all God's elect. So he knew God would save Isaac for Christ's sake. His faith was in God's Lamb, Christ Jesus!

Believer, every trial is reasonable in light of Christ. When God calls us to part with something dear it is reasonable because God gave his own Son and Christ gave his Life for us. Just as Isaac bore the wood, likewise, Christ bore the cross on which he was crucified. It is reasonable for me to be called to bear the cross of suffering and rejection for Christ's sake when Christ bore the cross of fierce justice for me! Isaac willingly laid himself on that altar to be sacrificed, picturing Christ who willingly laid down his life for his Father and for his people. Considering Christ's willingness, it is reasonable for me to willingly suffer whatever light affliction God will have me to suffer. Throughout the trial, Abraham's faith looked one place, saying, "*God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt offering!*" Throughout the trial, look to the same place, saying, "*God has provided himself a Lamb for a burnt offering!*"

The end purpose of the trial is always to bring us nearer to Christ our Substitute, "*Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns.*" May the trial of our faith make us lift up our eyes and behold Christ! But Abraham did not stop there, "*Abraham...offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.*" The trial is to make us offer up Christ to God in our stead through faith in him. And the trial is to bring us to this resolve, "*And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*" Believer, since Christ has quenched the fire of justice against us, we shall see Christ's glory both now and forever in the mount of the LORD. That is the end of God-given faith, the end of every trial and shall be our ultimate end in glory.