

Faith, Tested And Crowned

Gen. 22:1

Introduction:

- A. If you have ever traveled east from Las Cruces on highway 70 toward Alamogordo, you passed by the White Sands national monument. In addition to a national monument, the White Sands is also an active military installation. All along the highway are signs warning that the area is closed to the public. Often times they will even close the highway when transporting missiles. It is not an area in which you want to wonder too far from the prescribed route.
- B. The reason this facility exists is to test missiles before putting them into use. Most, if not all, the missiles fail miserably at first. But rather than giving up, they refine and test until the missile is perfected. Theory works well on paper, but only actual practice perfects.
- C. Just as the White Sands are the proving grounds for missile testing, we should understand that we live in a proving ground every day. A life of faith is a life of testing so we can win when the battles come. It is easy to deceive ourselves about the ruling motive of our lives, but our thoughts and actions reveal the true motive, so let us not cheat ourselves and God.

I. God Dispenses Tests

- A. For our benefit - strengthen & equip us - Jas. 1:2-3; 1 Pet. 4:15-16
 - 1. Need wisdom to see benefit of trials - Jas. 1:5
 - 2. Steadfastness & completeness - Jas. 1:2-4
 - 3. Expected of the righteous - 2 Tim. 3:12
- B. Abraham already had some "conditioning"
 - 1. Faith to leave Ur - Heb. 11:8
 - 2. Famine leading to sojourn in Egypt
 - 3. Long wait before Isaac's birth
 - 4. Animosity between Sarah & Hagar
- C. The command to Abraham - Gen. 22:2
 - 1. A test of devotion - He loved Isaac (precious possession)
 - 2. Love for God must be supreme - Matt. 10:37

- a. All must choose between earthly & heavenly love
- b. All must first crown God in our hearts

II. *The Response Of Faith*

- A. Prompt obedience - Gen. 22:3
 - 1. Readiness to yield to God & suppress "logic"
 - a. Dashed hopes held in Isaac
 - b. "Failed" promises of God
 - c. Trust beyond apparent "impossibilities"
 - 2. The long journey requires steadfastness
 - a. Imagine three days of mental anguish
 - b. Assured our road not a "blind alley"
- B. Unshakable confidence
 - 1. We Will Return - Gen. 22:5
 - 2. Even if it required a miracle - Heb. 11:17-19
- C. Undying trust in God's provisions - Gen. 22:8
 - 1. A lamb for sacrifice - Gen. 22:12-13
 - 2. Strength equal to "impossible" tasks (tests)
 - a. All outward wants pale to doing God's Will
 - b. Richest treasure from His storehouse is NOT material

III. *The Reward Of Faith*

- A. God's acceptance and approval
 - 1. Noblest aim = be well-pleasing - Gen. 22:12
 - 2. The promise of life - Jas. 1:12
- B. Deeper insight into God's will
 - 1. God provided substitute sacrifice - Isa. 53:4-6
 - 2. All provisions are "In the mount" - Gen. 22:14
 - 3. He never trifles with us, or acts arbitrarily
- C. Multiplied blessings - Gen. 22:16-17; Matt. 19:29

Conclusion:

- A. Are your reflections of the Mounts in Moriah focused up sufferings & heartaches OR blessings? Times of trial or deliverance?
- B. Our resources may give out & strength vanish, BUT God WILL provide rich blessings for the needs & hungers of every soul.