

January 12

Scriptures: Read Genesis 22 & 23

Key Verse: “And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me’.”(Genesis 22:12)

Overview

Abraham proved faithful in this most difficult test of obedience: would he be willing to obey God even if it meant sacrificing his long-awaited, precious son? This was a heathen practice, done to appease the gods or find favor with them, yet Abraham was certain he had heard the voice of the one true living God, so without questioning he did as the Lord instructed Him. Whom did he love more... god or the son God had promised him?

Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son, believing and trusting that “God was able to raise him up, even from the dead” (Hebrews 11:19). He took Isaac up to Mount Moriah (known today as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem). Believing God would do a miracle, he said to his servants who were waiting for him, “we will come back to you” (22:5). It must have broken Abraham’s heart when young Isaac asked, “My father... look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (22:7). His reply was prophetic as he told his son that God would provide, and indeed God did provide a ram. Here we have a new revelation of God as “Jehovah Jireh”, which means, “the Lord will provide”. Because Abraham had proven his obedience, God confirmed the promise that through Abraham’s seed the whole world would be blessed (i.e. through Jesus Christ) and the covenant between them was reaffirmed.

Those who faithfully stand in a time of testing will come out of it pure as gold; all others will be burned like hay and wood (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 1 Peter 1:7). God expects that those whom He calls to a position of leadership will stand firm under testings as trials. He never tempts us with evil (James 1:13), but God tests the righteous as He did with Abraham (Psalm 11:5; James 1:3).

Abraham grieved at the great loss of his wife, Sarah, who died at age 127, and for the first time he considered buying land so that he might have a suitable burial place for her. It is amazing that Abraham; although very rich, never owned any land until this land would be for him and his descendants, so he was waiting patiently for this to be accomplished, all in God’s perfect timing.

Because Abraham was an honorable, humble man, the people showed tremendous respect and called him “a mighty prince among them” (23:6). He purchased the field of Machpelah beside Hebron and buried Sarah in the cave which was on that land. Later, Abraham himself was buried in that cave, as were his descendants, Isaac and Jacob, as well as Rebekah and Leah.

Prayer

O God, Your Word tells me that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Grant that we may have the wisdom that comes from our reverent hear of You and may it result in obedience to You.