

In Spirit & Truth: Why God exposes our faith?

God creates, God loves, God judges, God saves. Today I want us to consider that God exposes. Specifically, Why God exposes our faith? With history in His absolute control, Why does God expose our faith?

MOUNT MORIAH

The mountain Jesus is discussed with the women about mountain of worship for the Jews is Mt. Moriah. The name means "ordained or considered" which we will find out is very appropriate. The scriptures all speak of this mountain twice as Mt. Moriah, once in Genesis 22, with God asking Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice there and in 2 Chronicles 3 with Solomon building the temple in Jerusalem.

Throughout ancient times, Jerusalem was the central place for the religious world and the central place of Jerusalem was the Temple on top of Mt. Moriah. Genesis 22 account of Abraham supposed sacrifice of Isaac is interestingly the first place the word "worship" is mentioned in scripture. This would be a defining moment for Abraham and in scripture as generations after generations would hear of this worship experience of their forefathers.

Mt. Moriah and King's Valley

ACT 1

This Genesis 22 event is actually the final act on the purification of Abraham that started many years before. In Act 1 of Gen 12 will see Abraham's obedience and faithfulness to God's direction, where God simply tells him to Go and I will show you. Abraham leaves physical comfort and emotional safety and God shows him a land that He will give to his offspring.

The path of the journey

Just one unsaid paradox in the equation at this point is that Abraham has no heirs and the prospect of such is looking extremely dim. Now scripture leaves much of thoughts of Abraham unsaid but we see the results of mental, emotional, and spiritual turmoil. Let's just say that Abraham does not led his wife well. The tension between God's direction and physical reality gets the

best of him. His trust in Yahweh fails. Act 1 is a mixed bag where he goes but does not trust. God exposes Abraham that while He obeys God, the turmoil of his heart caused him to be careless in ways that are shameful to the lost.

ACT 2

Act 2 of God's exposition of Abraham is Genesis 14, where God sees apart of Himself in Abraham. When Abraham hears that his kinsman, Lot is taking captive. He responds in a surprisingly God-like manner. He uses his own resources, risks his own live, holds nothing back and challenges military forces. He defeats them, delivers his kinsman, restores the possessions to the afflicted. Abraham then meets this mysterious Priestly King, Melchizedek in King's Valley, which would have been throwing distance from Mt. Moriah. Melchizedek greets Abraham with bread and wine. Although Abraham responded in a Christ-like fashion, Melchizedek assures him through his blessing that victory came solely from the Lord. Abraham responds by giving a tenth of everything he owns to Melchizedek at King's Valley

In Act 2, Abraham does not withhold his possessions to God. We see Abraham's heart is not connected possessions although he is a rich and powerful man. But the unsaid becomes said, Abraham shows that land, possessions, and glory is not his supreme desire. Abraham desires a bloodline, His heir currently is his slave. A crippling shame. A shame that consumed his wife as well. This self-condemnation led them together to the shameful sin plot of Hagar. The thing that captured Abraham's affection the most was the very thing that corrode his trust, his faith in God. However, God is a god of compassion when we fail him the most. A God who provides, and never allows our sin to foil His ultimate purposes. Sin creates hurt, death, and misery, but its oppression is over us, not His sovereignty. God's work is not jeopardized. His promise, His delay, and His miraculous fulfillment all centered around His desire to expose Abraham's faith and purify Abraham's worship.

ACT 3

Genesis 22 begins the final act. Obedience to God and love for his son will tear him in diametrically opposed directions. Already at his wife's request and confirmed by God, he has expelled his son Ishmael. Questions are raised but not directly answered. Genesis 22 is paradox not simply morally but

theologically. Isaac was the son on whose survival the fulfillment of all the promises depended. God has explained what he wants. Has Abraham's worship removed the distrust that had led him to destructive sin when tested before?

Let's read Genesis 22

The centrality of "the place"

Throughout out all ancient cultures, a mountain was a suitable place to meet God. Verse 4 mentions that Abraham "lifted up his eyes, and saw the place from afar" "Place" is here would have been understood as a holy place or sanctuary. Often we use vague terminology cause we are lazy, yada yada yada... But the author here is drawing our attention to the centrality of "that place" A place that is central to the redemptive story of history. A place of sacrifice. A place where the heart would be completely exposed.

Much like in Exodus 20:20 where **"Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."** The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was." Abraham felt the conclusions that God would bring in that place.

Interestingly, the passage mentions on the third day. Great things happen in the "this place" on the third day. Scripture does this throughout the old testament.

On the third day that Jacob had fled," Genesis 31:22. Gen. 42:18 **On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God:"** Exodus. 19:11 **"and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people."** Great things are exposed on the third day!

John Calvin put it this way, "the delay made Abraham's ordeal the more painful. "God does not require him to put his son immediately to death, but compels him to revolve this execution in his mind during three whole days, that

in preparing to sacrifice his son, he may still more severely torture all his own senses”

The sacred and and dedication of “this place,” in once he lifted his eyes, the rest of his journey would be just him and his lad as he refers to him, which may suggest that Abraham is trying to become detached.

Remember in Exodus, only Moses was allowed to come to the top of the mountain; the people had to stay at the bottom. “That place” would be his place of worship.

Where he passes or fails his test, where God provides on his promise, where He delivers the righteous, where He blesses obedience.

The Importance of “Here I am”

Abraham listens and obeys. Abraham responds with faith. Three times in this passage, we see the phrase “Here I am” Verse 1 Abraham accepts the challenge of his faith from God with the words “Here I am.” Right the middle of the intense struggle, Abraham uses the phrase again, this time to Isaac in verse 7. The Father could not stay disconnected from the son long, Isaac repeated “my father,” “my son” which draws our attention to the deep affection binding father and son.

The way the son follows the Father is beautifully submissive. Was he just so naive which would make his future death the more heart-troubling. Or was he sharp enough to see through his father’s vague answer and realize that he was the intended sacrificial lamb? Either way, His faith is in his father.

The Jewish Midrash, comments that Isaac with the wood on his back is like a condemned man, carrying his own cross.

The final time Abraham uses the phrase, “Here I am” is in verse 11 when the divine messenger is grasping Abraham’s attention. Finally the climax has been reached and God responds **“now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”**

This paradoxical testing leads the capsule of Mt. Moriah in verser 14, "So Abraham called the name of that place, **"The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."**"

God provides for the ones who present themselves to him with "Here I am" We saw that last week with Isaiah. The testing of one's self brings a struggle, but this why worship requires courage.

Hebrews 4

This idea is best expressed in the New Testament with **"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."** (Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV)

Jesus as the Son Sacrifice

We have the great privilege to see that Old Testament worship was "but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities" Hebrews 10:5 says **"Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book'."**

Jesus would make his way in the world and say "Here I am," The paradoxes and questions and tension were all part of his orchestration of exposing our faith. He left the comfort his home and used his resources to rescue the captives and restore them. Jesus gave God the Father the glory. Jesus was the Son Sacrifice. God was Father with overwhelming heartbreak of what had to occur. Isaac was the son on whose survival the fulfillment of all the promises to Abraham depended. Jesus was the son to fulfill all promises to mankind. Jesus took the wood on his back and climbed up on the altar. The Lord provided a lamb. On that day on the mount of the Lord, it was provided for all

time so that worship would occur. God the father did not withhold his one and only Son.

After three days of preparation, God blessed the nations with the reality of resurrection, of which our faith rests. By Scripture alone, By Faith alone, By grace alone, By Christ Alone, and to Glory to God alone. Worship is why God exposes our faith.

The Top 10

Lets look at 10 timeless connections between worship and Genesis 22 that we can apply to our lives today.

1. Worship is personal and corporate heart exposure.
2. Worship reveals our heart to us.
3. Worship is responsive.
4. God becomes the clearest in the paradoxical moments.
5. Worship exposes that God is never in need.
6. Worship has no back plan
7. Worship must be willing to leave the comfort for the sake of others.
8. Worship is the preparation for the process of purification.
9. Worship requires cost.
10. Worship does not withhold.