

A Time of Testing

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." Hebrews 11:17-19

God commanded Abraham to do something that defied his conscience, logic, and God's own command. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man."¹ God offered Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. The philosopher Soren Kierkegaard called it "the teleological suspension of the ethical," i.e., no rationally ethical answer can be given for what God demanded of Abraham, and therefore judgment must be suspended until the end time.

To whom could Abraham go for support? Can you imagine a man's wife affirming him at such a time? We institutionalize people for behavior like this. Still, Abraham obeyed. Hebrews tells us that Abraham's confidence rested in God's promise, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called;" not Ishmael or one of the sons of Keturah, but Isaac. On the basis of this promise Abraham concluded that after he killed Isaac, God would raise him from the dead. No wonder God "is not ashamed to be called his God."²

You do well to remember at least two things from Abraham's time of testing. First, there will be times in your life when God will test you. You cannot predict what that testing looks like, but you can prepare for it, by trusting God in the little things; the little risks prepare you for the severe times of testing.

Second, when all seems dark and you have no where to turn, trust the promises of God. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"³

¹ Genesis 9:6 ² Hebrews 11:16 ³ Numbers 23:19