

A TEST OF LOVE – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Welcome, friends. Today, we want to talk on A Test of Love. And it is from a familiar scripture,

Genesis 22:1-14

¹Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

²Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

³So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

⁶So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. ⁷But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

⁸And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹ But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

So he said, “Here I am.”

¹² 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.”

¹³ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

A Test of Love.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for this moment and the opportunity and the privilege we have freely to hear Your Word in this part of the world. Speak to us now, we pray...in Jesus' Name. Amen!

You don't need to go to school to know what a test is. Life is full of tests or trials, and they come even when you have not asked for them. Before we go any further, I would like to differentiate between test and temptation.

In James 1:12-13 (ESV),

¹² *Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.* ¹³ *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.*

You see, those two words are found in the text: trial or test and tempt or temptation. And in the Greek New Testament, those two different words are the same in the Greek: test, tempt, temptation – they are the same word, one word actually giving two different meanings. It is the source that determines what the meaning is. It is the source that will determine whether is testing or temptation. It is testing when God is the source, and temptation when it is the devil. And to make the difference clearer, hopefully, let me observe a couple of things:

- i. The devil tempts you so that you will fail, but God tests you so that you may succeed or pass.
- ii. The devil tempts you to demote you by making you evil like himself, but God tests you to promote you by making you like Himself in righteousness.
- iii. The devil tempts you to bring the worst out of you, but God tests you to bring the best out of you.
- iv. The devil tempts you to discourage you, but God tests you ultimately to encourage you.
- v. And finally, the devil tempts you to mess you up, but God tests you to make you up.

And I know that women will like the last word or the last expression. They are more familiar with it than men. They understand it better because they like to *make up*, and that is why they have at least three kinds of mirrors: the full-size mirror, the half-size mirror and the face-size mirror that stays in the purse. Men don't need all those. I hope women you are still with me?

I want us to examine:

- first of all, the context of the test;
- secondly, the commonsensical reasons for the test;
- thirdly the consideration of God's choice of words;
- and finally, comparison of test results.

When I talk of test result we mean, the test result of Abraham and ours.

Let's look at the context of the test. We read in Genesis 22:1, *¹Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham.*

After these things. That must catch your attention as a good bible student. You are bound to ask yourself, after what things? Then that is the context...that is the context of the account of Abraham's test: after these things. And this leads us to the preceding chapter, chapter 21. And in chapter twenty-one you find the miraculous birth of Isaac, the object of the test. And that is Genesis 21:1-7. You find also Abraham reluctantly sending away Hagar and her son Ishmael upon the recommendation of Sarah his wife, and then of course, God's confirmation of it. You will also find the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech, a treaty that was prompted by the visible enviable and memorable relationship that Abraham had with God. That is in Genesis 21:22-34. It was after these things, these three things: the birth of Isaac, the departure of Hagar and Ishmael and Abraham's treaty with Abimelech that God tested him. That is the context, the commonsensical reasons for the test. It is commonsensical to ask, why did God test Abraham? It was probably to prove some points to the devil, the devil who delights in maligning anyone who loves God (He did the same with Job) and also to reassure Abraham. And I will observe three things:

1. God is trying to prove that Abraham's love for God was not dormant – but dominant.
I think God was trying to prove that Abraham's love was not just theoretical, but practical.
2. God was trying to prove that Abraham's love was not just relative but superlative. Superlative in the sense that Abraham had the greatest love for God vis-à-vis: the love he had for this son Isaac.

We have considered two things, the context of the test of Abraham, the commonsensical reasons for the test of Abraham.

We will continue when we come back next time to look at the consideration of God's choice of words, and comparing the test results: the test results of Abraham and ourselves because God still tests His people today.

And friend, if you belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ, there is no gain saying it that God will test you. He does test His people for their good. If you do not belong to him yet, because you have not yet given your life to Christ, this is a very beautiful opportunity for you to do so, and I will call upon you to talk to Him now and tell Him, God, I am a sinner.

You know some people tell you you confess your sins to receive Jesus Christ. No sinner can confess his or her sins. They are innumerable, especially those who are older. All that He's expecting you to do is to admit that you are a sinner just like He said all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And then you surrender your life to Him. Do so now, friend, and you will know the beauty of working with God.

PRAYER:

Faithful Father, blessed Lord, we thank You again for the time we have spent in Your Word. I commit into Your hands now, as many as will yield themselves to the Savior. Give them assurance of Your salvation. Write their names in the Book of Life, and destroy the works of Satan in their lives in any form or shape, in JESUS mighty Name we have prayed. Amen.