

# No Other Gods (9): We Will Have No Other Gods

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(Genesis 22:1-18)

## I. Introduction

- A. One of the great things about a Christian college is that we began most classes in prayer
1. Some of the prayers were routine— and I didn't have a prayer in some classes!
    - a. But I do remember this as being meaningful in some classes, like science classes
    - b. Dr. Tucker started biology reading a chapter from Proverbs and leading a prayer
    - c. I don't know if I remember that more— or getting our mail regularly mixed up
  2. But sometimes our routine class prayer led to some unexpected comic relief—
    - a. Guy fell asleep and friend woke him, telling him he was supposed to say the prayer.
      - 1) He jumped up and started praying while Dr. Wright was writing on the board
      - 2) You don't get into trouble for praying! “*Why, thank you*” and went on writing
    - b. There was the guy asked to pray in the lunch line at Gano cafeteria.
      - 1) They rang the bell every 15 minutes (*I still want to bow any time a bell rings*)
      - 2) He prayed, “*Forgive the hands that prepared this food*” He did get into trouble!
    - c. Then there was the prayer before a Bible class a friend told me about at Harding
      - 1) Student prayed for several things “... *and be with us as we take this test...*”
      - 2) A panicked voice blurted out from the back of the room, “*Test! What test?*”
  3. But we do know that feeling, right? Tests can hit you when you least expect them
    - a. You think everything is sailing along as smooth as silk... then the test hits you
      - 1) Maybe a health problem. A career choice. A financial set-back A family crisis.
      - 2) Whatever form the test comes, it comes suddenly and takes you by surprise.
    - b. And we have the same freaked-out feeling of that student, “*Test! What test?*”
    - c. We figure we'll have time to cram before the test, but that is seldom the case
- B. We're ending our series *No Other Gods* with the time Abraham was hit with that feeling
1. There are times when God lets us go through times hardship as a means of testing
    - a. Why did God have them gather just enough manna for one day (**Exo 16:4**)
    - b. Why did God have them wander in the difficulty of the wilderness (**Deut 8:2**)
    - c. Why were some Canaanites left in Canaan for 2<sup>nd</sup> generation? (**Judges 2:22-23a**)
    - d. Why does God let us go through difficulties and trials today (**James 1:12**)
  2. In our text today, Abraham will be tested just when he thought his life was settled
  3. “*Test, what test?*” In passing the test, he shows what it means to have no other God
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## II. We Will Have No Other God: Abraham

- A. Our text in **Genesis 22** rather casually says, “*God tested Abraham*” (**Gen 22:1-2**)
1. Sounds like an understatement! This isn’t a pop quiz— this is the final exam!
    - a. There is no way that Abraham could have seen this coming. *Test? What test?*
    - b. God shakes foundation of his entire world— “*Take your son, your only son...*”
    - c. What kind a choice was this for any God-loving parent? This just doesn’t seem fair
  2. But Abraham had left everything to follow God and risked on God’s promises
    - a. God’s dealing with Abraham began with 3 foundational promised in **Genesis 12**
      - 1) He’d make Abraham a great nation; Bless Abraham to make his name great
      - 2) And through Abraham, all the nations of the earth were to be blessed
    - b. In **Genesis 15**, Abraham gives voice to the nagging doubt—he has no children
      - 1) He wonders if his servant Eleazar will become his heir? Is that God’s plan?
      - 2) God assure him that he himself will father the child of promise (**Gen 15:4-5**)
      - 3) And at that point, Abraham becomes the father of all who believe (**Gen 15:6**)
- B. But from that point on, Abraham commits himself fact that God keeps his promise
1. There are fits and starts—like Sarah’s scheme to have a child through handmaiden
    - a. He even fall back on his old lie and tells Sarah “*tell them you’re my sister*”
    - b. There are ups and downs in **Gen 17** when God tells Abraham Sarah will bear a son
      - 1) Abraham laughs. Then Sarah laughs. They name their son Isaac, “*laughter*”
      - 2) Later in the chapter, Abraham is circumcised at almost 100 as sign of covenant
      - 3) I think circumcising yourself at 100 seems a sure sign of obedience and faith!
  2. So, Isaac is born and now the way is clear for the promise of God to be fulfilled
    - a. Abraham must think that surely the hard part of this faith stuff must be behind him
    - b. Then God says, “*Abraham, I have a test for you.*” And Abraham says, “*Test!?*”
- C. The question we want to ask, “*Why does God give Abraham such a difficult test?*”
1. **First**, maybe test was to where Abraham was really putting his trust
    - a. Abraham had trusted in God for so long and so well, but now he held his child
      - 1) Was Abraham trusting in Isaac now rather than fully in God?
      - 2) We could see that, right? Was this a test to refocus where his faith rested?
    - b. Is God forcing Abraham to see there’s nothing more important than God Himself?
    - c. Well, it’s just as important for me to see that as Abraham! And for you to see that!

2. **Second**, maybe this test is really to make sure Abraham isn't in retirement mode
    - a. Abraham had served God all his life, but his great acts of service was in past
    - b. Had he fallen into a comfortable retirement? Was this to disabuse him of that idea
    - c. Was this test to show Abraham (and us) that faithfulness and serve never end?
- D. We really have no idea what Abraham thought about WHY God was testing him
1. Hebrews tells what Abraham thought about what God would do (**Heb 11:17-19**)
    - a. He never stopped thing that God was going to work through Isaac
    - b. He never wavered in his obedience to what God had commanded
  2. As Abraham climbed Mt. Moriah, Isaac was already dead to him (**Gen 22:9-12**)
    - a. Abraham had no other god but God—not even a son he waited his whole life for
      - 1) He was willing to give up the most important thing in the world to follow God
      - 2) This story isn't in the Bible because it's interesting or perplexing or maddenin
    - b. It's there because Abraham is an example for us— What or who is our Isaac?
    - c. We must have no other god but God; we give up anything and everything for Him

### III. We Will Have No Other Gods: Today

- A. What is your Isaac? What is the most important thing in the world to you today?
1. Is it your job, your house, your money, your family, your friends, social standing?
    - a. What is the one thing or the one person that really matters the most?
    - b. What is the one thing God would ask you to give up if he were to test you today?
    - c. Don't say that couldn't happen... because that is what happened to Abraham
  2. Granted, God doesn't test our faith in the same way He did with Abraham
    - a. May test us in financial failure... or in financial success! Both test our faith, right?
    - b. We can be tested when we lose our job or fail in a relationship... or if both go well
    - c. Anytime anything threatens to squeeze God out of his rightful place—that's a test
  3. Remember, Abraham was tested after he was given what had promised for years
- B. We have looked “*No Other Gods*” series at different false gods that vie for God throne
1. Most of them (if not all) share one thing in common— *are blessings out of control*
    - a. **Pleasure**: God made things for enjoyment (**Eccl 2:24-25**) *Make these the focus...*
    - b. **Money**: God gives ability to make money (**Deut 8:17-18**) *What if we forget that?*
    - c. **Family**: God is all for family (*was His idea*), but we must put God first (**Mt 10:37**)
    - d. **Success**: God is all for us working hard, but there is something better (**Lk 10:41-42**)

2. What will we put first in our life? Because what we put first, that becomes our god
    - a. Just to make sure that the Lord God is really our real god—God might give us a test
    - b. Far-fetched? Abraham might have thought so, until he was climbing Mt. Moriah
      - 1) Maybe God *directly* send difficulties and challenges to test us (like Abraham)
      - 2) But you know, He doesn't always go out of His way to take them away either
      - 3) People who say God that wants us healthy/prosperous have different Bible!
- C. There are three groups of people who are listening to this lesson today
- First**, there are those who have not yet been tested— at least, not very severely
- a. Some people lead pretty charmed lives; that was me until about three years ago
  - b. Then Dad died, I met Mr. Meniere, we had little fender-bender. “*Test? What test?*”
  - c. If you haven't gotten your telegram from Mt. Moriah—get ready. It's coming!
2. **Second**, some are being tested now; you may be in the middle of crisis. One of many.
- a. Lesson for you is to take a deep breath, squint and look for God through the haze
  - b. Yes, God allows us to be tested, but Mt. Moriah gets a new name (**Gen 22:13-14**)
  - c. God never promised to keep us out of the test, only to provide the way of escape!
3. **Third**, some of you have been through the test and have come out the other side
- a. You know the story of Abraham up close and personal—been there and done that
  - b. You lived what he lived, know what he knew; you know your most important thing!
  - c. In crucible of testing, you've come know you will have no other God except God

## IV. Conclusion

- A. Sculptors don't create masterpieces with feathers—they use hammers and chisels
1. While the sculptor's work is in progress, there's flying chips, dust and a huge mess
    - a. In the process of their work, the untrained eye can't see anything of beauty
    - b. They pound away on a block of granite until they reveal the beauty they saw within
  2. God develops faith within us in that same way— and it's not pretty or pleasant either
    - a. He chisels and molds us into what we must become by His mercy and grace
    - b. That process of becoming is never easy, and sometimes is quite painful
- B. But it's that pounding, testing, shaping that helps us determine our most important thing
1. What will we really treasure? Will we really have no other God except God
  2. That's the question we must answer today and answer every day of our lives