

God Tests His People

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God tests His own people (Genesis 22:1-12). Abraham is given one of the greatest tests in all the Bible when he is asked to sacrifice his son Isaac.

There is something you should know about God. **He tests people. He tests His own people.** He tests the faithful, the saints, those who are following Him closely, those who are in the center of His will. Why does He test His own faithful people? James says it's to demonstrate their faith (James 1:2-4; 2:21-24). Jesus said to Simon Peter, *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers* (Luke 22:31-32).

How does God test people? By bringing them to the edge, then seemingly over the edge, where there is no return, no rescue, no reasonable hope, seemingly no hope at all. Then in the midst of what would appear to be a situation of despair, **at the last minute, God delivers.**

Matthew tells us this about the birth of Jesus. *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit'* (Matthew 1:18-20). Now if I were Joseph, I would have said to the angel, "Where were you nine months ago? Why didn't you tell me this back then before I went through all this agony which resulted in a decision to break our betrothal and get a quiet divorce?" **But God, it seems, brought Joseph almost over the edge before He delivered him.**



Noah worked on the ark for one hundred years, probably under the criticism of everybody. Then finally Noah is told to get his family on the ark. His wife and sons are taken from their friends. His daughters-in-law are taken from their families. Then they just sit there (on the ark with all the animals) and nothing happens for seven days. **If I were Noah, my faith in God's Word would be brought right to the edge of its limits. Then it began to rain!**

In the chapter before Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, we see Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness of Beersheba about to die of thirst. Hagar had completely given up on any rescue from God. **Her faith was over the edge.** Her only prayer was, "do not let me see the boy die." *She walked away from his lifeless body and sat down where she could not see him* (Genesis 21:14-16). Then the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven...!

Abraham took Isaac up to Mt. Moriah, where Solomon later built the Temple in Jerusalem. We read, *And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son* (Genesis 22:10). **My faith would have been over the edge.** *Then the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven...!* (verse 11).

God tests faithful people.