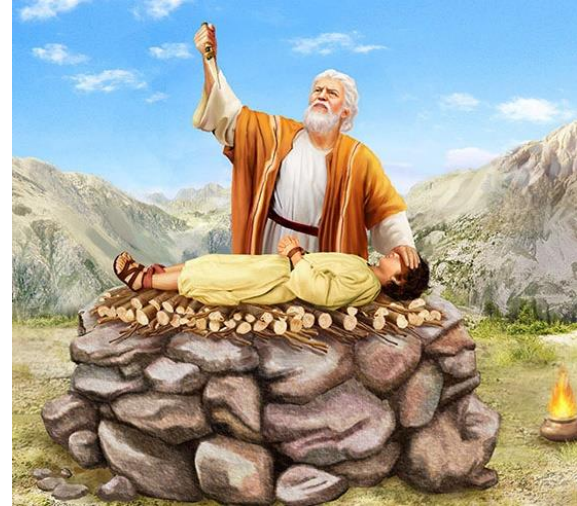


EXTREME HEAT

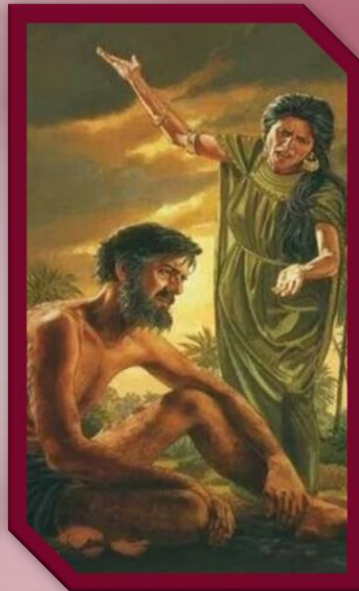
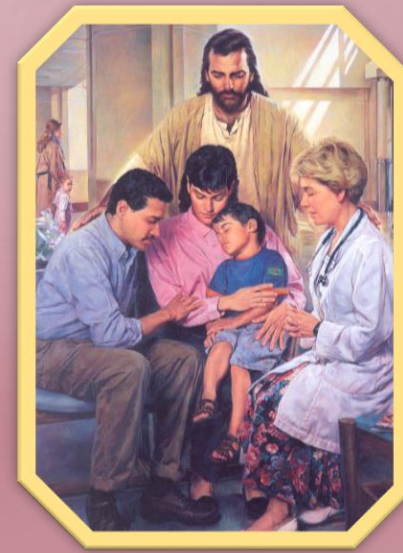
Lesson 5 for July 30, 2022



What should we think about God when he makes us or allows us to go through harsh trials?

How were people like Abraham, Job, or the people of Israel changed by those trials?

What can help us to go through those crucibles victoriously, without distorting our perception of God?



- **Subjected to extreme heat:**
 - The crucible of Abraham
 - The crucible of Israel
 - The crucible of Job
- **Surviving the extreme heat:**
 - Comfort
 - The presence of God

THE CRUCIBLE OF ABRAHAM

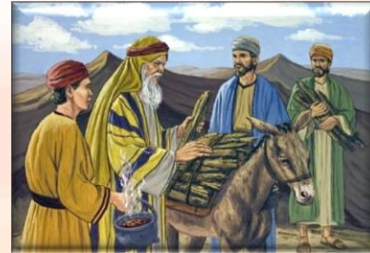
“Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” (Genesis 22:2)

Human sacrifices? Hurting old faithful Abraham unnecessarily? Killing the heir of the promise?

If we didn't know the end of this story, it may seem that God's request is irrational and capricious.

The Bible clearly states that this was a test from God (Heb. 11:17). Was Abraham supposed to prove something? Or was it a demonstration for the heavenly beings? Or was God just trying to teach Abraham a lesson?

Certainly, Abraham knew God's voice and obeyed Him by faith. He learnt more about His love and salvation (Gn. 22:1, 3, 5; Heb. 11:19; Jn. 8:56).



THE CRUCIBLE OF ISRAEL

"When the Lord first began speaking to Israel through Hosea, he said to him, 'Go and marry a prostitute, so that some of her children will be conceived in prostitution. This will illustrate how Israel has acted like a prostitute by turning against the Lord and worshiping other gods.'" (Hosea 1:2 NLT)

The kingdom of Israel had left God and were worshipping other gods. Thus, God allowed them to go through several trials:



Hosea 2:3. He sent them drought



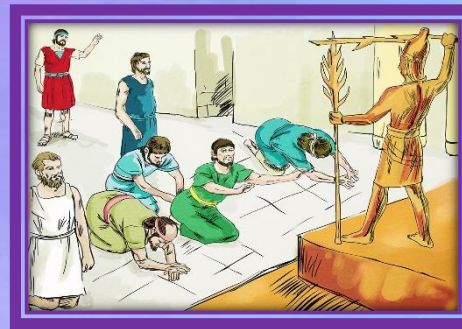
Hosea 2:5-6. He surrounded them with "thorns," hardships



Hosea 2:9. He took away the grain, wool, and linen that they offered to the Baals



Hosea 2:11. If they didn't change, He would stop any reason for joy



God's intention with them is the same as today. He wants us to acknowledge that He loves us and blesses us, and that we can be joyful only if we stay by His side.

THE CRUCIBLE OF JOB



“Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’” (Job 1:20-21)

By calling Satan’s attention to Job, God triggered and allowed a series of disastrous events (Job 1:8-12).

Why did God trigger such suffering? Is He being fair by allowing Satan to cause so much evil? Is this a unique case, or could God do the same to us?



“Naked I came ... and naked shall I return”

- He accepted that he wasn’t entitled to anything

“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away”

- He acknowledged that God was in control of his life

“Blessed be the name of the Lord”

- He reinforced his faith with God’s righteousness

We may respond to a situation like this in two ways: becoming bitter and rejecting God, or strongly clinging to Him. Job’s response was worship. How did he worship (Job 1:20-21)?

COMFORT

“who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4 NIV)

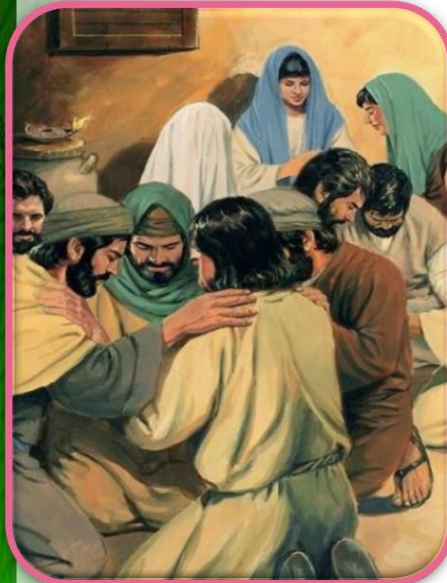


The person who suffered the most in the New Testament (after Jesus) was Paul (2Co. 11:23-29).

He faced many harsh situations with the certainty that God could deliver him (2Co. 1:10), and that the Church would be praying for him (2Co. 1:11).

He was sure that suffering helped him to trust himself less and trust God more (2Co. 1:9).

He felt comforted by God in those trials. He knew that would help us to comfort others in their tribulations (2Co. 1:4).



THE PRESENCE OF GOD

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” (Isaiah 43:2)

The fact that God exposes us to extreme heat may move us to doubt His fair and loving character. We must not doubt God’s motivation (even if we don’t understand it), love (Ps. 103:13), protection, and care (1Co. 10:13).

No matter the trials we face, He has promised: “I will be with you” (Is. 43:2).

Then why does God expose us to extreme heat?



God doesn’t want to destroy us, but to refine us from our sin



He doesn’t want us to suffer, but to grow and to become purer



He will never leave us, but He will take care of us

“Those who have borne the greatest sorrows are frequently the ones who carry the greatest comfort to others, bringing sunshine wherever they go. Such ones have been chastened and sweetened by their afflictions; they did not lose confidence in God when trouble assailed them, but clung closer to His protecting love. Such ones are living proof of the tender care of God.”