

THIRD NIGHT OF HANUKKAH

As we move through the days of the **Festival of Lights**, we come to the third day. And this day I have chosen Abraham to be the representative to continue our theme of the light. We started with the **Light of Creation**, when the Word of YHWH came into being and the concept of separation was birthed. Then we came to Noah, who represented the eight days of Hanukkah, a candelabra that was "**shut in by the LORD**" and used to bring the Light to the new world. Tonight, it is Abraham's turn to pass the torch.



Abraham had a roller-coaster life. He lived comfortably with his parents for many years as a Gentile. Then, as a wealthy senior citizen, God called him out from his country and from his family and told him to go to a land "**that I will show you**" (12:1). Having no idea what that meant, he packed up his entire house and all his possessions and headed out of Dodge with his nephew Lot. From status, wealth, and land, to living a nomadic life, Abram was living day to day, trusting the Voice he had heard. From witnessing the dramatic destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, through the battle of the five kings and meeting Melchizedek, to the mistake of going into Hagar, Sarai's servant, Abraham's life was nothing short of constant drama. Sound familiar to your life, you might say? I know I can certainly relate.

But, unto Abraham, a child was born. The child of Promise ~ **Isaac**. Twenty-five years after he left home, and after many mistakes along the way, the promise came true. Years later, God comes to Abraham and instructs him to do something that most certainly would have stopped his heart dead in its tracks. The climax and tension of Abraham's entire life come down to how he is going to respond to this next statement. It comes from Genesis 22:2 (222!): "*Then 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."

Take a moment and feel what he must have been feeling. God comes to you and personally gives you a promise that a child would come from your loins and that an entire covenant will be made with him. Then He returns and tells you to sacrifice that child on an altar. And oh yeah, He has to point out that this is *"the child in whom you love."* There are no words for what that must have felt like.

This child was the light of Abraham and Sarah's life. Although they didn't realize it, Isaac was the foreshadowing of Messiah Himself, the true Light of the world. Abraham was faced with a crisis of belief. Would he trust the Creator at His word? He chose to submit to the idea that he had to be missing information. He chose to walk by faith and not by sight. He never asked why and somehow knew that God would bring forth a miracle in order to keep His promise.

Genesis 22:4 says, *"Then on the THIRD day, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off"* (emphasis mine). On the third day, he sees the place chosen to sacrifice his only son. On the third day, YHWH appeared to the people on Mt. Sinai. On the third day, the Son of God would be revealed as the true sacrifice and Light of the world. And it is on this third night of Hanukkah that we remember the obedience of Abraham and what it means to truly trust God in our darkest hour and that He knows what He is doing.

Abraham had no idea that he was **"Abraham,"** the famous founder of both Israel and much of the world. His *single act of obedience* was a **test** of his faith to see if he was worthy of the promise that he was given. This is the pattern of our Creator. He calls the unqualified and then qualifies the called. And sometimes He has to test us by killing our dreams so that He will know that the dream/promise is not more important than the Giver of the dream.

Can you relate to Abraham? Do you have any situations in your life that seem insurmountable? Any circumstances that when you look through your natural eyes you say to yourself, *"I seriously see no way how this is going to work out."* Those are our Abrahamic moments where we need to trust His Word and just do what is right for that moment. We don't live in the future. We live in the now moment. And it is what we do or don't do in the now that determines our tomorrow.

So be an Abraham and don't think about tomorrow or worry about how you are going to make it through this or that. Trust Him and obey Him today and tomorrow will take care of itself. Today is the test. Pass it because the third day is on its way!

Trust the Light. Be the Light. Pass the Light.

Happy Hanukkah!

Jim Staley