

# The Better Way

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## SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

Physical Address:  
1327 Spring Cypress Rd.  
Spring, TX 77373

Mailing Address:  
25403 Lancewood Dr.  
Spring, TX 77373

Office: 281-353-2707

springcoc@gmail.com  
www.churchesofchrist.com

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.  
Worship.....10:00 a.m.  
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.  
(via Zoom Meetings)

#### ELDERS

David P. Brown  
Ken Cohn  
John West

#### DEACONS

Bret Bailey  
J. D. Gunter  
Eric Paluka

#### EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

#### SECRETARY

Sonya West

## ABRAHAM ON MOUNT MORIAH

*Bill Jackson*

**“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?”** (Jam. 2:21-22). Thus, we are taken back to the events found in Genesis 22, and to Mount Moriah, to see faith put into action by Abraham. James correctly uses these events in Abraham’s life to illustrate real faith. But Abraham, and the same event in his life, is also used in the great roll-call of faithful ones in Hebrews 11. **“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called”** (11:17-18). Thus, both James and the writer of Hebrews pay honor to Abraham and the events on Moriah as a demonstration of true faith. Since these passages comment on the events of Genesis 22:1-19, we wish to note some points from that Biblical record. Let us stand, as it were on Mount Moriah, and see the events of Genesis 22, and to note principles giving benefit to us today. We can learn the following lessons.

**(1) Here was the moment of testing. “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham”** (22:1). God differs from Satan in this respect: He does not tempt man to do evil. However, He does try, or prove, men. This life, then, is a testing area, whereby our suitability for heaven is determined. It is in this connection that James says, **“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience”** (Jam. 1:2-3). We then must be aware that times of testing will come, and that God desires that we be tried, or proven. Here, in Genesis 22, we find that God had a test for Abraham, and an extremely hard one at that. The difficulty of the testing makes for the brightness of the faith. Faith being the precious thing that it is we should put forth all effort to make sure that the testing results in praise, honor, and glory (1 Pet. 1:7).

**(2) Here was the testing of values.** A test could hardly be a worthwhile thing if, in the testing, the things we treasure, value, and count precious were not touched. Real testing of faith comes when our treasures are involved, and when real faith demands a proper attitude, and proper use of, these treasures. **“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”** (Mat. 6:21). In Genesis 22, the value to Abraham was not only that this was his son, but his only son, and God adds, **“whom thou lovest”** (22:2). So Abraham was brought to the test regarding that which was of great value to him—his only son, and whom he dearly loved. Abraham rises to the heights in that pleasing God was of greater value to him than the son of his love. Abraham would thus agree with Solomon that fearing God, and keeping His

commandments, is the whole duty of man (Ecc. 12:13).

**(3) Here is the test for unquestioned obedience.** We do not read that Abraham argued the matter with God. One can only imagine the heartache in Abraham as he gathered the wood and made preparation to go and offer up his son for a burnt offering before God. John tells us that during the Lord's ministry, that some of the disciples would consider His teaching, and conclude that **"This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"** (John 6:60), and that finally many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him (6:66). Abraham here receives a **"hard saying,"** but he stands as a true hero of faith in that the record is silent as to any protest from him. In our day, when the simplest and most oft repeated Bible material, whether on obedience, the church, the Gospel, baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc., is continually questioned by man, Abraham's great faith is refreshing. He received a harder command than anything the Lord lays upon man today, and he moved out in unquestioning obedience!

**(4) Here we find the sum statement of a man of faith, "God will provide"** (Gen. 22:8). Isaac, himself, notes that the party has the fire and the wood, but he wonders as to the animal to be offered. Abraham assures him that God will provide, and more to the point, in Abraham's mind God had already provided—He had provided Isaac! It is in the epistle to the Hebrews that we are told something wonderful about the attitude of Abraham at this time. It was not that God would provide a way out for Isaac, but that even in the death of Isaac, God would provide a resurrection for him! We are told that Abraham accounted **"that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead"** (Heb. 11:19). The writer tells us, in the same verse, that in Abraham's mind Isaac was certainly dead, and that in sparing him, Abraham received his only son back from death—in a figure.

Later, Moses would make a distinction between those things God has revealed to us, and those things unrevealed—the things secret (Deu. 29:29). Thus, men are told to accept what is revealed and to have faith in what the Word says (Rom. 10:17); beyond the revealed things continue to have faith in God and His Word, and let us not worry about the rest of it. God will provide just what is needed, and what is right.

Abraham had that attitude and simply left it in God's hands. Then, when he had already lifted the knife against Isaac, lying bound upon the altar, the angel stays his hand, and God provides an animal for sacrifice. Abraham names the place Jehovah-jireh, meaning **"in the mount God's provision seen."** God had provided!

**(5) Finally, we must not overlook the permanent Bible principle: obedience is rewarded.** At the end of the testing, there is the blessing. Peter says that at **"the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls"** (1 Pet. 1:9). Here, at the end of the testing of Abraham, God tells him that there is great blessing **"because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son"** (Gen. 22:16). Blessings are promised him in that his seed would be multiplied to be as the sand upon the sea shore (22:17). There is also the blessings stated that includes the Christ, for the Lord continues: **"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"** (22:18). We thus stand with Abraham on Mount Moriah, and see the man's great faith—faith that is not just something spoken of, and certainly not an example of faith only. Here is real obedient faith—real Bible faith! May we also know that this life is a time for the testing of our faith, not in the same way that Abraham was tested, but a testing nevertheless? And may we be as faithful as he was, in giving to God loving, unquestionable obedience!

*Deceased*

## HEAVEN

*L.D. Harless*

A Russian cosmonaut failed to find God in space. A Danish theologian failed to find God in his search among the great religious writers. An English historian failed to find God in his laborious piecing together of source materials used in his monumental study of history. A German philosopher failed to find God in his examination of pure reason. An American scientist failed to find God in his experiments. But a Hebrew found God in the wilderness. A Jew found God on the way to Damascus. A Roman soldier found God on Golgotha. And millions more have found God in His Holy Book. And the finding of God has led them to believe in the existence of heaven.

For every person who believes in heaven there are many more who do not believe. To the unbeliever, death means the blackness of utter nothingness. To the believer, death is the last great adventure.

When the great writer-preacher Alexander Campbell lay dying his eyes rested inquiringly upon the quiet glory of the sun's rays upon his bed. He was told it was the setting sun. "Yes," he said, "the setting sun! It will soon go down. But unto them that fear his name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (*Lectures on the Pentateuch*, p. 49).

"Truly, if our hope in Christ were limited to this life only we should, of all mankind, be the most to be pitied" (1 Cor. 15:19, *Phillips*). So said the apostle Paul. Any preaching that ignores or eliminates altogether the hope of heaven is poor preaching, unworthy of the name. Cut off a man's hope of heaven and he is reduced to the status of beast or bird. However, Jesus said, "**Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven**" (Mat. 10:31, 32).

The word *heaven*, with its derivatives, is found hundreds of times in the Bible. If a man believes the Bible it follows that he will believe in heaven. Yet in recent years we have seen an ungodly progression, or digression, of thought in which men came first to reject the possibility of the existence of the devil. Then they rejected the Bible teaching about hell. And now some who masquerade as gospel preachers are disclaiming the living God and discounting the possibility of an eternal home of the soul. Such preaching is emptying church buildings and despoiling men's hearts.

To all such we would ask, What did Jesus mean when he said to His disciples, "**In my Father's house are many mansions**"? (John 14:2). What did He mean when He said, "**I go to prepare a place for you**"? (*Ibid*). What did He mean when He taught His disciples to pray, "**Our Father who art in heaven**"? (Mat. 6:9).

When man hungers, though he must earn his bread by "**the sweat of (his) face**" (Gen. 3:19), there is food to be had. Water exists to quench his thirst. But he has another great need—to love and be loved. Therefore, God has provided the home and family. But man's greatest yearning is for life beyond the grave. And heaven is the fulfillment of this towering need. It

is extremely logical to believe in the existence of heaven.

When Voltaire said, "If there were no God it would be necessary to invent him," it is quite likely that he spoke in jest. But his words are true. When Columbus found a new continent he found ignorant savages who worshipped a Great Spirit. And hundreds of years before, when Paul came to Athens, he found learned philosophers who worshipped an "**unknown God**" (Acts 17:23).

Paul insists that "**flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**" (1 Cor. 15:50). Any discussion of heaven must deal with death and resurrection. The great ones of Athens were scornful of such preaching. "**When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again**" (Acts 17:32).

We do not know whether they ever heard another gospel message. But we do know their spiritual counterparts are with us today. Since they cannot measure God or heaven in test tube or telescope they refuse to believe. But the rule still holds, "**We walk by faith, not by sight**" (Acts 17:32).

Is it too far-fetched to believe in the continuation of our lives in another form? Consider the radical changes of body form that some insects undergo during their development after hatching from the egg. The process is called metamorphosis. Butterflies, before their maturity, have a form entirely different from their parents. Before issuing forth a beautiful butterfly, this lovely creature went through various unlovely stages—egg, larva, caterpillar larva that spins a cocoon, chrysalis, emergence from its case and finally a full-formed butterfly.

I was interested in an account of the familiar monarch butterfly which stated it is the only known example of true migration among butterflies:

Where the same individuals return to the locality from which they started ... The young larvae that hatch from the eggs develop on the milkweeds, pupate, and later emerge as adult butterflies. This migration of the monarchs is somewhat similar to that of birds, with the exception that the adult monarchs make only one round trip in their lifetime, for they die soon after the eggs are laid. The stimulus for these migrations in butterflies is unknown (*The Harper Encyclopedia of Science*, Vol. III, pp. 768-9).

"The stimulus for these migrations...is unknown!"

Also unknown is the stimulus that drives these creatures to fulfill their short life span. And as for man, what insistent force stimulates his thinking about life beyond the grave? Whether unlettered aborigine or cultured member of civilized society—there throbs within his breast a longing that transcends his every material need. That longing impelled the apostle Paul as he **"fought with beasts at Ephesus"** (1 Cor. 15:32), and as he endured beatings, shipwreck, hunger, cold and the pressing anxieties of all the churches (2 Cor. 11:24-28).

It was this great apostle who could say, **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"** (Phi. 1:21). And when at last he came face to face with death he asserted triumphantly:

**The time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day** (2 Tim. 4: 6, 7).

For man, the end of life on earth is just as logical and certainly more inevitable than the beginning. The longest day ends in the shades of night. The mightiest river becomes lost in the sea. And the history of man with all his triumphs and tragedies, joys and sorrows, victories and defeats—must end. And all is meaningless if death is not **"swallowed up in victory"** (1 Cor. 15:54). **"The last enemy that shall be abolished,"** said Paul, **"is death"** (1 Cor. 15: 26).~

**Deceased**

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **This Tuesday, March 26th:** Ladies' Bible Class
- **March 29th-31st:** Spanish congregation lectureship.
- **Sunday, April 28th:** Monthly meal
- **Saturday, May 11th:** Graduation Banquet
- **Saturday, May 25th:** Fish Hatchery Rd Lectureship (Part #2)
- **Mon-Wed, July 15th-17th:** VBS at Spring
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Rd. Lectureship (Part #3)

## THOSE TO SERVE

**SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2024**

<b>Announcements</b>	John West
<b>Scripture Reading</b>	Andrew Paluka <i>Rev. 11:15-19</i>
<b>Song Leader</b>	Gary Blasingame
<b>Prayer</b>	Zack Nero/Steven Johnson (AM) Bret Bailey/Ken Cohn (PM)
<b>Speakers</b>	David Brown
<b>Lord's Table (AM)</b> (Mark 14:22-25)	
Joshua West	Bret Bailey
Zack Nero	Eric Paluka
<b>Lord's Table (PM)</b>	
J.D. Gunter	Ben Gunter
<b>Audio/Video Monitor</b>	Steven Johnson
<b>Camera/Door Monitor</b>	Bret Bailey

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024**

*(via Zoom Meetings)*

<b>Announcements</b>	J.D. Gunter
<b>Speaker</b>	Ken Cohn
<b>Bible Class Teacher</b>	David Brown

### FOR MARCH

<b>Prepare Communion</b>	L. Paluka
<b>Lock Buildings</b>	Nero
<b>Prepare Bulletin Board</b>	TBA

## IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Josie Contreras, Maddie & Cohen Young, Edith Young, Bob Terry, Glenda Hackworth, Zack Nero, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Bernice Hastings, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Noah Hackworth, Orlinda Chumbley, Carmen Hardy, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

## TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who was told that a sword would pierce her own soul?

**Answer to last week's question:**  
Seven; Deu. 7:1