

# ABRAHAM OFFERING UP ISAAC

## **Genesis 22:1-19**

Sunday, September 18, 2011

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<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

<sup>2</sup>And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

<sup>3</sup>And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

<sup>4</sup>Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

<sup>5</sup>And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

<sup>6</sup>And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

<sup>7</sup>And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

<sup>8</sup>And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

<sup>9</sup>And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

<sup>10</sup>And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

<sup>11</sup>And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

<sup>12</sup>And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

<sup>13</sup>And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

<sup>14</sup>And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

<sup>15</sup>And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

<sup>16</sup>And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

<sup>17</sup>That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

<sup>18</sup>And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

<sup>19</sup>So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

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Pastor Alan Morse

First Baptist Church of South Lake Tahoe

In the fire of this test Abraham proved to be genuine and his love for God to be real!!

Our faith is not really tested until God asks us to bear what seems unbearable; do what seems unreasonable, and expect what seems impossible.

God's unreasonable request of Abraham: "<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass after these things that God did test Abraham and said unto him, Abraham, and he said, Behold, I am here. <sup>2</sup> And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I tell thee of. <sup>3</sup> And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac, his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him. <sup>4</sup> Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. <sup>5</sup> And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the donkey; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again unto you."

God said, "<sup>2</sup> Take thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest... and offer him there for a burnt offering..."

What God was asking from Abraham, his son Isaac, meant more to him than the whole world. What God wanted out of Abraham was the closest thing to his heart. Isaac was in answer to all of Abraham's prayers, all that he had lived for, hoped for, and now God was going to "just-like-that", take him away from him.

Abraham could have said to God what we say to ourselves, "Why?!" it makes no sense. His faith, his trust in the wisdom of God was being tested beyond human comprehension, but, there is no greater expression of a man's love for God found in the Bible.

We know that Abraham is a great man of faith; he has proven it throughout his life. Abraham knows God has his reasons and he has learned by experience not to look for explanations; he will understand later. He knows in the wisdom of God, God has a plan; God knows what He is doing. As it unfolds, in time it will be shown to be the answer to the world's greatest need. There is seen in Abraham and Isaac in an O.T. portrait the Gospel of Christ. Abraham is preaching the Gospel in his day to the lost world around him that they might be saved...

Abraham offered up his only son that he loved. God the Father offered up His only Son in His love that the world might be saved. The ram in the thicket was offered up on the place of Isaac that he should not perish. The Lamb of God was offered up in our place so that we should not perish but have everlasting life (Gal. 3:8).

What stands out in this picture is what is absent. There is absolutely no questioning, no resentment, not even a word out of Abraham. Abraham does not fight God just because he does not understand what God is doing...

If we are hell-bent on figuring out why God is allowing for suffering in our life then we will never trust Him for the wonderful things that God was going to do for us and the world around us. God is saying, "Just trust Me on this one; I know what I am doing and you will be happy when it is over with."

What is on trial here which will cut into Abraham, to the core of his being, is his heart. Where does Abraham stand in his love for God? If he is given a choice between God and his son, Isaac, who will he choose?

I just wonder if Abraham's attention, his affections in his daily life had become distracted from the God he loved to Isaac? Could it be possible that we could be distracted? Could it be that our heart and our thoughts have become redirected toward the people we love and the cares of this world?

God was "jarring" Abraham's whole world by taking away from him that which meant the most to him, that he might know in his heart that God meant more. Experiences that are life-threatening clarify reality and bring us into focus on God and eternity.

If God was to cause our world to come crashing down around us in order that we might sort out where our heart stood with Him, would we still choose to love Him or would we rebel and walk away from Him?

It is in our twisted human nature to love what God does for us and as long as He is doing those things for us He has some of our attention, but does He have us? God is looking for our love; does He have our heart? God had Abraham's heart. Does He have our heart?

There was this pastor in Oregon and he watched the church and his whole life being taken away from him in the jealousy of those he thought he could trust. He saw they seemed to be getting away with it and he was now cleaning carpets to support his family. After the dust had all cleared and time had passed he thought to himself, "Lord, I honestly love You and regardless of what people do, and the things that happen I do not understand, I am not going to let go of You."

I can't overstate the fact when I read this account that this kind of test does come to us all; it is to prove us genuine or not. It is to show us our own heart, and if we see under pressure that we are artificial, it gives us the opportunity to get real with God. One thing I have noticed about the great and honorable people of the Bible and of this world is, they have a heart for God.

Abraham's love is a picture of the love of God for us.

This heartrending story moves in slow motion so we don't miss the love of God.

What are God's intentions, what is the clear meaning to the passage when He says to Abraham three times, "thy son, thine only son," whom Abraham was willing to offer up to God in his love?

John 3:16 is the answer to that question with the same wording: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

What did the Heavenly Father do in His great heart for humanity and His love for the world? He gave His Son, His only Son to die at the cross to save lost sinners. The Heavenly Father was willing to sacrifice the One who meant the most to Him to save sinners who would bring the greatest pain to Him.

In this emotionally moving story we see Abraham and his son walking alone together up the side of that mountain to the place where Abraham would bind Isaac on the altar to offer him up. What we can feel is the love of God for us. Abraham is a portrait of the love of God.

Rom. 5:8 “but God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

This is the proof of the love of God on showcase beyond question.

Rom. 8:32 “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?”

Rom. 8:35-39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...”

Do we have any idea of the sorrow and suffering and pain that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit were feeling that day on Mount Moriah, at the Cross, when God offered up His Lamb to save us from our sins? The great heart of God was utterly broken for us in costing Him the death and suffering of His Son to save the very people who would have Him crucified.

The story of Abraham offering up his son in every way is a portrait of the Cross and the crucifixion of Christ.

It is no accident that Mount Moriah, the place where Abraham took Isaac to be offered is the very place where Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins. It was the very place of the Cross, 2,000 years later. Amazing!

“<sup>4</sup> Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.”

Jesus was crucified, buried and three days later rose from the dead. There is not a detail in this account which does not paint the picture God wants us to see in our salvation.

“<sup>5</sup> And Abraham said unto the young men, Abide ye here with the donkey; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you.”

The father and the son went alone that day to the Cross; God shut the world out in the hours of darkness when the light of the sun was blotted out.

There is a song that describes this experience: “I’ve often walked this lonely road and no one seemed to care, my burdens and my sorrows had brought me to despair, I’ve often complained to Jesus how folks were treating me, and then I heard Him say so tenderly, My feet became so wear on Calvary’s road, the Cross became so heavy I fell beneath the load, oh weary pilgrim stay close to my side and take your cross and follow close behind”.

Christ knows our loneliness; He knows the path we have been called to walk, and the weariness of the load we have been called to bear. He knows the anguish of the Cross and how folks are mistreating us when all we did was love them.

He knows when we are going it alone and the feelings of despair; He knows when we stumble beneath the load, but then He says “follow close behind”.

Someone would have said that day, “Abraham, where are you going with your son?” He would have said, “To offer him up to God”. They would have said, “Why would God ask you to do such a thing?” He would have said, “I don’t know, nor understand, but this one thing I know, my son and I will come back down from that mountain together.”

Abraham did not believe for a second that God would fail in His promises to raise up a Seed (Christ) through his son, Isaac, that would be the salvation of the world (Gal. 3:18). If Isaac was going to die, which Abraham fully believed that day, God was going to raise him from the dead.

Heb. 11:17 “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called (Christ): <sup>19</sup> Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a like figure.”

This was the Gospel preached to Abraham of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and he saw the Gospel in what was going on, and believed in the resurrection of the coming Savior. (Gal. 3:6)

“<sup>6</sup> And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son, and he took the fire in his hand and a knife <sup>7</sup> and Isaac said, My father, and he said, Here I am my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the Lamb... <sup>8</sup> And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb”.

The wood placed on Isaac was the Cross that Jesus would have to bear up Calvary’s mountain. The fire and the knife would be the wrath of God being poured out on Christ dying in our place, taking God’s judgment for us. God slew His Son for the sins of the world so we could find forgiveness in Christ. Our sins were paid in full in Jesus Christ. God’s justice

was satisfied and we were forgiven and in the righteousness of Christ were declared justified.

Isaac's question, "Where is the Lamb?", is answered in, "God will provide Himself a Lamb." Jesus Christ is "The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

"<sup>9</sup> ...and Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar of wood."

What a heart wrenching moment for both father and son. There could be no greater agony. It has reached a point where you feel the need to look away. Abraham has bound his son and placed him on the altar in giving his all to the God he so deeply loves. Every feeling within him must be crying out to God, "This is my son you are asking of me. How can I bear to see the anguish of his soul in what he does not understand?"

Isaac, scholars say, is between 30 and 33 years of age. He could easily fight and get away but he doesn't. In his love and trust in his father he submits to the father's will to be slain and offered up. The meekness that is seen in Isaac and obedience to his father, the world has never seen but in Christ Himself in His surrender to the mob of sinful human beings who would crucify Him. He, in humiliation and shame, was dying for the sins of the world in obedience to His Father, that in the love of God we might be saved.

The holiness of this sacred sacrifice in the love of God must never, never be underestimated, rejected or despised by a Godless world! What more could be said? Let us never say "How could God be so unfair? Why would God cause all this suffering and take from me?"

"<sup>10</sup> And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son<sup>11</sup> and the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of Heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham, and he said, Here am I. <sup>12</sup> And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

This is a real crisis in Abraham's life. God has brought this man to an excruciating experience and a strain upon his heart. God sees that Abraham fears Him. He saw into his heart in the test of his faith. God looks into our hearts.

Isaac was spared from the hand of his father and allowed to live, but Jesus was not spared and would have to be slain by His Father for the salvation of us all.

“<sup>13</sup> And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. <sup>14</sup> And Abraham called the name of the place, Jehovah-Jireh, as it is said to this day: in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”

Jehovah-Jireh means “The Lord Will Provide”. He had provided a sacrificial offering in the place of the death of Abraham’s son.

God sent His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord into the world to shed His blood and die in our place for our sins, taking the judgment of God which our sin deserved. He satisfied fully the justice of God on our behalf, and in the righteousness of Christ we are declared by God, righteous. We are freely forgiven of our debt we owed to God (the wages of sin), pardoned, set free, and God will remember our sin no more.

God’s covenant with Abraham’s descendants (the Jews) is reconfirmed forever.

“<sup>15</sup> And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time <sup>16</sup> and said, By Myself have I sworn (this is an unconditional promise), saith the Lord, for because thou has done this thing (by faith), and has not withheld thy son, thine only son <sup>17</sup> that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed (the Jews) as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore (you won’t be able to count them), and thy seed (Christ) shall possess the gate of His enemies.”

This thing Abraham did went far enough in his faith to let us know what God already knew: that he was willing to give his son. The promises of God never shine brighter than in the furnace of affliction. Abraham described this whole experience as worship because to him it was. He sought to please God with his whole heart and did not hold back anything from God.

This unconditional promise in “the I will’s” of God did happen at the first coming of Christ (the Seed), and will ultimately happen at the second coming of Christ.

The Enemy, Satan, and his followers who hate the Jews will be defeated forever and Israel will be the people of God forever.

We clearly see as proof that God has faithfully kept His promise to Abraham today, 4,000 years later: the Jews are still with us and will be until Christ comes and gives them the kingdom.

Jehovah-Jireh did provide a Lamb in our place and we are saved forever through the Seed (Jesus Christ) of Abraham forever!