

*We do not give Abraham enough credit for the testing of his faith that he endured.*

***And he said, Stretch not out thy hand against the lad, neither do anything to him; for now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son], from me.*** - *Gen. 22:12*

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton

April 5, 2009

[HTTP://www.biblestudyadventures.com](http://www.biblestudyadventures.com)

#### **Sources -**

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included which are from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible texts, commentaries, and word definition's are taken from the excellent source, the e-Sword Bible computer program found at <http://www.e-sword.net/index.html> unless otherwise indicated.

#### **Introduction -**

In Genesis chapter 22 we see the incredible test of his faith that Abraham endured. He is told by Jehovah God to sacrifice his son. This he prepares to do, and Isaac follows his father there. We have to wonder at what point Isaac begins to suspect what is about to happen. Yet he submits. But God has prepared a substitute sacrifice, a lamb caught in a nearby bush. This story has elements in it that should remind us of the story of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and of the sacrifice He did make on our behalf.

#### **Lesson Text - Genesis 22 -**

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God tried Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! and he said, Here am I.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only [son], whom thou lovest, Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and there offer him up for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up and went to the place that God had told him of.

4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.

#### **Comments -**

**We have to wonder what the significance of the third day is here. The number three is significant in the New Testament as well, and in Christ's own life, and ministry. It would be good to see what some classic commentators have thought on this.**

#### **Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible from the Pocket e-Sword Bible Program -**

Genesis 22:4

The third day - "As the number SEVEN," says Mr. Ainsworth, "is of especial use in Scripture because of the Sabbath day, Gen\_2:2, so THREE is a mystical number because of Christ's rising from the dead the third day, Mat\_17:23; 1Co\_15:4; as he was crucified the third hour after noon, Mar\_15:25: and Isaac, as he was a figure of Christ, in being the only son of his father, and not spared but offered for a sacrifice, Rom\_8:32, so in sundry particulars he resembled our Lord: the third day Isaac was to be offered up, so it was the third day in which Christ also was to be perfected, Luk\_13:32; Isaac carried the wood for the burnt-offering, Gen\_22:6, so Christ carried the tree whereon he died, Joh\_19:17; the binding of Isaac, Gen\_21:9, was also typical, so Christ was bound, Mat\_27:2.

"In the following remarkable cases this number also occurs. Moses desired to go three days' journey in the wilderness to sacrifice, Exo\_5:3; and they traveled three days in it before they found water, Exo\_15:22; and three days' journey the ark of the covenant went before them, to search out a resting place, Num\_10:33; by the third day the people were to be ready to receive God's law, Exo\_19:11; and after three days to pass over Jordan into Canaan, Jos\_1:14; the third day Esther put on the apparel of the kingdom, Est\_5:1; on the third day Hezekiah, being recovered from his illness, went up to the house of the Lord, 2Ki\_20:5; on the third day, the prophet said, God will raise us up and we shall live before him, Hos\_6:2; and on the third day, as well as on the seventh, the unclean person was to purify himself, Num\_19:12: with many other memorable things which the Scripture speaks concerning the third day, and not without mystery. See Gen\_40:12, Gen\_40:13; Gen\_42:17, Gen\_42:18; Jon\_1:17; Jos\_2:16; unto which we may add a Jew's testimony in Bereshith Rabba, in a comment on this place: There are many THREE DAYS mentioned in the Holy Scripture, of which one is the resurrection of the Messiah." - Ainsworth.

Saw the place afar off - He knew the place by seeing the cloud of glory smoking on the top of the mountain - Targum.

#### **Further comments -**

**As Adam Clarke mentions above, Christ did say, in Luke's gospel, that He would be perfected on the third day, referring to His crucifixion. Here on the third day Abraham sees the mountain where his faith is tested so greatly, and then spoken of so highly (see verses 12-18 below), and rewarded by God.**

*Luke 13:32 And he said unto them, Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected.*

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

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and the knife, and they went both of them together.

**Comments -**

**Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice and placed it on Isaac's shoulders to carry to the place of sacrifice. This reminds us of the cross beam laid on Christ's shoulders to carry to Golgotha where He was sacrificed.**

**7 And Isaac spoke to 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 sheep for a burnt-offering?**

**8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering. And they went both of them together.**

**Comments -**

*...Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the sheep for a burnt-offering - We have to wonder at the resoluteness of Isaac here, for he must have had some misgivings at this point. He saw that they did not have a lamb for the sacrifice. And it was only he, and his father Abraham who were going up that hill. And whatever he had learned from his father about the ways of Jehovah God, still the peoples around them were pagan, and did perform human sacrifice. What would you have thought, or done at that moment?*

*...My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering - We also have to wonder what Abraham was feeling when he said that to Isaac. Did he have any doubts, or fears, that Isaac, his only son, whom he and Sarah had waited years for, might really die here. Would God really raise him from the dead? What could he do then? What would he tell Sarah when he got home? Wouldn't you have worried about that? The writer of Hebrews tells us that Abraham had faith that if Isaac did die, then God was even able to raise him from the dead.*

*Heb 11:17 **By faith Abraham, when tried, offered up Isaac, and he who had received to himself the promises offered up his only begotten son,***

*Heb 11:18 **as to whom it had been said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called:***

*Heb 11:19 **counting that God was able to raise him even from among the dead, whence also he received him in a figure.***

**But the writer also makes it clear that this was a test of his faith. It would have been no test, if Abraham felt no doubt, or fear. Put some flesh, and bones on this story, and feel Abraham's trial for the terrible test of his faith that it was. To do less is to dishonor God's test, and Abraham's success.**

9 And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built the altar there, and piled the wood; **and he bound Isaac his son, and laid**

him on the altar upon the wood.

**10 And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slaughter his son.**

**Comments -**

*...and he bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood – What was Isaac thinking at this moment? He could see that he was about to die, sacrificed to Jehovah God by his father. Or do you really think that his only thought was that surely God would prevent this sacrifice, or even raise him from the dead. The wood of the sacrifice reminds us of the cross that Christ was nailed to, as a sacrifice for us.*

11 And the Angel of Jehovah called to him from the heavens, and said, Abraham, Abraham! And he said, Here am I.

**12 And he said, Stretch not out thy hand against the lad, neither do anything to him; for now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son], from me.**

**13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind was a ram caught in the thicket by its horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt-offering instead of his son.**

**Comments -**

*...and hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son], from me – Abraham was willing to do this, just as God was, giving His only begotten son to die a sacrificial death in our place, and by that atoning for our sin. And that death of sacrifice that Christ submitted to, in our place, is the only reason that we don't have to die for our sins throughout eternity. It is the only reason that we don't have to, and shouldn't try to, perform religious works all of our life to 'try to' gain entry into heaven. We won't succeed. Accept that sacrifice and forgiveness based on Christ's death. You can't add anything to it.*

*And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind was a ram caught in the thicket by its horns... - Perhaps a rustle in the thicket caught his attention, or God simply caused him to look in that direction. But whatever, Abraham saw the provision by God for this sacrifice. Does Isaac symbolize Jesus in His sacrifice? Certainly not, he represents us, all of we sinners, guilty in our sins, and awaiting death before God, and the judgment after that. We have no hope of entering heaven, without that sacrifice by an innocent one in our place, by their innocent death gaining us an entry before God, free of that guilty stain, and the certain judgment. Your works will not get you into heaven. Only the just one's death in your place. Look at what Paul says to the Galatians about that.*

*Gal 2:16 but knowing that a man is not justified on the principle of works of law nor but by the faith of Jesus Christ, \*we\* also have believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified on the principle of the faith of Christ; and not of works of law; because on the principle of works of law no flesh shall be justified.*

*Gal 2:17 Now if in seeking to be justified in Christ we also have been found sinners, then is Christ minister of sin? Far be the thought.*

*Gal 2:18 For if the things I have thrown down, these I build again, I constitute myself a transgressor.*

*Gal 2:19 For \*I\*, through law, have died to law, that I may live to God.*

*Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, \*I\*, but Christ lives in me; but in that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me.*

*Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness is by law, then Christ has died for nothing.*

**If we are justified by works, then Christ died for nothing. The Apostle Paul tells us that. Christ is symbolized here in the story of Abraham, and Isaac by the lamb, caught in the thicket, provided by God as a sacrifice in Isaac's place, and in our place ultimately. We are Isaac, without a hope, other than pure forgiveness, and no way to deserve that forgiveness, regardless of what we might do religiously. Christ is that sacrifice, willingly provided for us. We don't deserve it. God has graciously provided it. Accept that sacrifice, ask for and receive that forgiveness that God has provided for you. Then you will be acceptable before God.**

**14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said at the present day, On the mount of Jehovah will be provided.**

**Jehovah-jireh** - H3070 יהוה יראה<sup>e</sup> y hōvâh yir'eh yeh-ho-vaw'yir-eh' From H3068 and H7200; **Jehovah will see (to it)**; *Jehovah-Jireh*, a symbolical name for Mt. Moriah: - Jehovah-jireh.

15 And the Angel of Jehovah called to Abraham from the heavens a second time,

16 and said, By myself I swear, saith Jehovah, that, because thou hast done this, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son],

**17 I will richly bless thee, and greatly multiply thy seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is on the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;**

**18 and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because thou hast hearkened to my voice.**

#### **Comments** -

*I will richly bless thee, and greatly multiply thy seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is on the sea-shore... - Abraham is again promised that his descendent's through Isaac will become a huge number of people. Let's consider the consequences of this promise, and it's fulfillment.*

**The fact of the ultimate size of the people of Israel, and their promised influence on the rest of the earth indicates that they can't be spread out thinly over all of the planet as many people assume. This level of influence they have will require geographic, and political unity, with a strong culture. Look at the two examples that God chooses to illustrate the size of their population. He uses the stars in the night sky, and the sand of the sea shore.**

**What about those stars then? Can they ever be fully counted? When we point our telescopes in a different direction, we see more galaxies, and each has billions of stars. The other example of a literal huge number of people, is the sand of the sea shore. Now if you insist on wanting to think that this just means that they will really amount to something in history, then go to the sea shore, and start counting those grains of sand. Let's see how long you continue to argue that. Think about it. The sun, or the moon, each amounts to a lot. They each influence our planet daily. But there is only one sun, and only one moon in our sky. Either of these could have symbolized the thought of not being huge in numbers, and yet amounting to a whole lot in history. But God didn't choose either the sun, or the moon as His symbol for the sheer size of the number of people of Israel. Rather He chose the stars, and the sand. Both of these are simply huge in numbers. The meaning is clear. They will be, in the last days, a numerically huge, and very powerful body of people.**

***...and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies* – Now this statement shows that they won't just influence the nations of the earth religiously for good. We can see that they will also be very strong militarily, and able to project that power over the earth, to hold strategic points, useful against their enemies. And this doesn't sound like it occurs during the more peaceful one thousand years of the millennium, but rather in the last days, leading into the Great Tribulation. So we can see in this picture of Israel in the future, that they will have enemies, and they will fight successfully against them. That kind of power is always expensive, and requires wealth. But with their numbers, and the blessings promised from God, they will achieve these things prophesied. The prophet Micah also talks about this time in his chapter 5:7-8. Let's see what insights he can give us on the nature of these people of Israel in those last days.**

*Mic 5:7 And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as dew from Jehovah, as showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men.*

*Mic 5:8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and there is none to deliver.*

**We can see that Micah gives us much the same picture of the people of Israel in the last days, that Jehovah God has here stated directly to Abraham. They will be large enough to have a very powerful military, which they will use. The other nations of the earth will not like them, and will fear their power greatly. If Israel chooses to move against other nations, they will have the power to do it. And the other nations won't have the power, position, and will to stand against these people of Israel in the last days. They will also have a very successful agriculture, and the merchandising that results from such.**

***and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves...* – They will also cause a blessing to result on the nations of the earth. This must be the religious blessing that God will ultimately disperse over the earth. He will use the people of Israel to help spread this message over the planet. This must refer to the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the forgiveness through faith in His sacrifice, and resurrection. God has especially used the peoples of the northwest to take that teaching to the nations.**

19 And Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

20 And it came to pass after these things, that **it was told Abraham, saying, behold, Milcah, she also has borne sons to thy brother Nahor:**

21 Uz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

23 (And Bethuel begot Rebecca.) These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham`s brother.

24 And his concubine, named Reumah, she also bore Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maacah.

**Comments - *it was told Abraham, saying, behold, Milcah, she also has borne sons to thy brother Nahor...* – The purpose of this information is to tell us that God is continuing to bless the other relatives of Abraham, and that they are prospering, and growing in numbers. This is important because Isaac is now a young lad, not a child. He will eventually need a wife to continue this line that God has established through Abraham, and Sarah. We can also see that even though Abraham may seem to us to be a long ways from his relatives up in the area we today call Turkey. But even then they stayed in contact, and knew of the progress of their family.**

### **Conclusion -**

**We have seen in this Genesis chapter 22 how great a test of his faith Abraham endured when he was told by Jehovah God to sacrifice his son Isaac. He did prepared to do this, and his son Isaac followed his father there willingly submitting even when bound, and laid on the alter. But God had prepared a substitute sacrifice, a lamb that was caught in a nearby bush. This story has elements in it that should remind us of the story of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and of the sacrifice He did make on our behalf.**