

## Genesis 22 – The sacrifice of Isaac – The Lord Provides

### *The Sacrifice of Isaac*

***Gen 22:1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."***

The word tempt is a little bit too strong; actually, the word means “test.” James makes it very clear in his epistle that God never tempts anyone with evil. God tempts folks in the sense that He tests their faith. God did test Abraham, and He asked him to do something very strange. - McGee

***Gen 22:2 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."***

Right after this chapter, we are told that Sarah was 127 years old when she died (see Gen\_23:1). When you put that down with this chapter, you find that this boy Isaac was not just a little lad. Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born and 127 when she died. That means that 37 years elapsed here. Since he is called a “lad” in this chapter, you would not gather that he actually was in his thirties—probably around 30 or 33 years of age.

“Take now thy son [notice how this plays upon the heartstrings of Abraham and of God Himself], thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest.” “Take now thy son”—the Lord Jesus has taken the position of the Son in the Trinity. “Thy son, thine only son”—the Lord Jesus is said to be the only begotten Son. “Thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest”—the Lord Jesus said, “The Father loves Me.”

“And get thee into the land of Moriah.” It is the belief of a great many that Moriah—that is, this particular part—is the place where the temple was built centuries later and also the place that the Lord Jesus was sacrificed—right outside the city walls. When I was in Jerusalem, I had the feeling that Golgotha and the temple area were not very far apart. They belong to the same ridge. A street has been cut through there, and the ridge has been breached, but it is the same ridge, and it is called Moriah. Let's not say that the Lord Jesus died in the exact spot—we don't know—but certainly He died on the same ridge, the same mountain, on which Abraham offered Isaac.

“And offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” The burnt offering was the offering up until the time of Mosaic law; then a sin offering and a trespass offering were given. Here the burnt offering speaks of the person of Christ, who He is. This is an offer of a human sacrifice, and, frankly, it raises this moral question: Isn't human sacrifice wrong? Yes, it is morally wrong. Had you met Abraham on that day when he was on his way with Isaac, you might have asked him, “Where are you going, Abraham?” He would have replied, “To offer Isaac as a sacrifice.” And you would have then asked, “Don't you know that that is wrong?” Abraham would have said, “Yes, I've been taught that it was wrong. I know that the heathen nations around here offer human sacrifice—the Philistines offer to Molech—but I have been taught otherwise.” You would then question him further, “Then why are you doing it?” and he would explain, “All I know is that God has commanded it. I don't understand it. But I've been walking with Him now for over fifty years. He has never failed me, nor has He asked me to do anything that did not prove to be the best thing. I don't understand this, but I believe that if I go all the way with Him that God will raise Isaac from the dead. I believe that He will do that.” – McGee

***Gen 22:3-4 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.***

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Abraham takes Isaac with him, and he takes the wood for the burnt offering. It took Abraham three days to get there, but remember that it was on the third day that Abraham received Isaac alive, back from the dead, as it were. That is the way that Abraham looked at it: Isaac was raised up to him the third day. What a picture we have here. - McGee

***Gen 22:5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."***

The transaction that is going to take place is between the father and the son, between Abraham and Isaac. And actually, God shut man out at the cross. At the time of the darkness at high noon, man was shut out. The night had come when no man could work, and during those last three hours, that cross became an altar on which the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world was offered. The transaction was between the Father and the Son on that cross. Man was outside and was not participating at all. The picture is the same here: it is Abraham and Isaac alone. - McGee

***Gen 22:6-8 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.***

"Abraham took the wood ... and laid it upon Isaac his son." Remember that Christ carried His own cross. The fire here speaks of judgment, and the knife speaks of the execution of judgment and of sacrifice.

Verse Gen\_22:13 tells us that shortly after this there was a ram that was caught in the thicket by his horns, and Abraham got that ram and offered it. Abraham says here that God will provide Himself a lamb. But there was no lamb there; it was a ram, and there is a distinction. The Lamb was not provided until centuries later when John the Baptist marked Him out and identified Him, saying, "... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Joh\_1:29). "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering"—it is very important to see that Abraham was speaking prophetically.

Abraham is now ready to offer this boy on the altar although he does not quite understand. - McGee

***Gen 22:9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.***

Isaac is not just a little boy whom Abraham had to tie up. He is a grown man, and I believe that Isaac could have overcome Abraham if it had come to a physical encounter. But Isaac is doing this in obedience. The Lord Jesus went to the cross having said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." He went to the cross to fulfill the will of God. What a picture we have here! - McGee

***Gen 22:10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.***

At this point you and I might have said, "Abraham, are you going through with it? It looks now like God is going to permit you to." He would have said, "I sure am. I've been taught that it is wrong, and I don't understand, but I've also learned to obey God."

This is a real crisis in Abraham's life. God has brought this man through four very definite crises, each of which was a real exercise of his soul, a real strain upon his heart. First of all, he was called to leave all of his relatives in

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Ur of the Chaldees. He was just to leave the whole group. That was a real test for Abraham. He didn't do it very well at the beginning, but, nevertheless, the break finally came. Then there was the test that came with Lot, his nephew. Abraham loved Lot—he wouldn't have been carrying Lot around with him if he hadn't. But the time came when they had to separate, and Lot went down to Sodom. Then there was the test with this boy of his, the son of Hagar, Ishmael. Abraham just cried out to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee!" He loved that boy; he hated to be separated from him. Now Abraham comes to this supreme test, the fourth great crisis in his life: he is asked to give up Isaac. Abraham does not quite understand all the details for the very simple reason that God has told him, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead (see Heb\_11:19), but as far as Abraham is concerned, he is willing to go through with the sacrifice. – McGee

Perhaps no scene in the Bible except Calvary itself is more poignant than this one, and none gives a clearer foreshadowing of the death of God's only, well-beloved Son on the cross. The supreme test of Abraham's faith came when God ordered him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering in the land of Moriah. Actually God had no intention of allowing Abraham to go through with it; He has always been opposed to human sacrifice. Moriah is the mountain range where Jerusalem is situated (2Ch\_3:1) and also where Calvary stood. God's words, "your only son Isaac, whom you love," must have pierced Abraham's heart like ever-deepening wounds. Isaac was Abraham's only son in the sense that he was the only son of promise—the unique son, the son of miraculous birth.

The first occurrence of a word in the Bible often sets the pattern for its usage throughout Scripture. Love (v. 2) and "worship" (v. 5) are first found here. Abraham's love for his son is a faint picture of God's love for the Lord Jesus. The sacrifice of Isaac was a picture of the greatest act of worship—the Savior's self-sacrifice to accomplish the will of God. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 22:11-12 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."***

"Abraham, Abraham" is the first of ten name duplications found in the Bible. Seven are spoken by God to man (Gen\_22:11; Gen\_46:2; Exo\_3:4; 1Sa\_3:10; Luk\_10:41; Luk\_22:31; Act\_9:4). The other three are Mat\_7:21-22; Mat\_23:37; Mar\_15:34. They introduce matters of special importance. The Angel of the LORD (v. 11) was God (v. 12). – Believers Bible Commentary

Now God knows that Abraham fears Him. How does He know? By his actions, by his works; previously it was by his faith. God sees your heart—He knows whether you are genuine or not—but your neighbors and your friends do not know. They can only know by your works. That is the reason James could say that "faith without works is dead." Faith has to produce something.

God tested Abraham. I believe that any person whom God calls, any person whom God saves, any person whom God uses is going to be tested. God tested Abraham, and God tests those who are His own today. He tests you and me, and the tests are given to us to strengthen our faith, to establish us, and to make us serviceable for Him. This man Abraham is now given the supreme test, and God will not have to ask anything of him after this. – McGee

***Gen 22:13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.***

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All the way from the Garden of Eden down to the cross of Christ, the substitution was this little animal that pointed to His coming—and God would not permit human sacrifice. But when His Son came into the world, His Son went to the cross and died: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom\_8:32). That cross became an altar on which the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world was offered. It is very important to see that. - McGee

***Gen 22:14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."***

Abraham now names this place which a great many people believe is where Solomon's temple was built. Golgotha, the place of a skull, is right there on that same ridge where the temple stood. There Abraham offered his son, and it was there that the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. This is a glorious, wonderful thing to see. Abraham calls the name of this place Jehovah-jireh, meaning Jehovah will provide. Here is where God intervened in his behalf.

***Gen 22:15-19 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.***

The LORD swore by Himself because He couldn't swear by anyone greater (Heb\_6:13). God's promise here, confirmed by His oath, includes the blessing of the Gentile nations through Christ (see Gal\_3:16). In verse 17c God adds to the already vast blessing promised: Abraham's seed would possess the gate of his enemies. This means that his descendants would "occupy the place of authority over those who would oppose them. The capture of the city gate meant the fall of the city itself." – The Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 22:20-24 Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.***

Abraham's brother Nahor had twelve sons, whereas Abraham had only two—Ishmael and Isaac. How this must have tested Abraham's faith concerning God's promise of descendants as the stars of the sky! It may have prompted him to send Eliezer in search of a wife for Isaac (chap. 24). Notice the name Rebekah in Gen\_22:23. – Believers Bible Commentary