

SESSION #10

- Abraham's story thru vs. 10 has focused on the *testing of Abraham*
- but from vs. 11 the focus shifts to:

B. PROVING JEHOVAH'S FAITHFULNESS

Gen 22:11-14

But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

So he said, "Here I am."

¹² 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."

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. 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."

Here we see one of the clearest pictures in Scripture of...

1. Substitution – a picture of Christ

- in John 8:56 Jesus made an astonishing declaration, "*Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad*"
- ...How did Abraham "see my day"? ...surely one of the most significant insights was this climactic event in his walk of faith
- notice some of the significant signposts pointing towards this future event:
- God led Abraham to a very significant place: Mt. **Moriah**
 - this was one of the hills on which Jerusalem was later built
 - more than that, Moriah is the traditional mount on which the Temple was built (referred to by Jews even today as Temple Mount)
- ...in other words, this was the very place where lambs were later sacrificed year after year for Israel's sins, looking forward to the ultimate sacrifice of God's Lamb for the world's sins on a neighboring hill, Mt. Calvary
- there are parallels in the story details too
 - vs. 6 – *laid the wood on Isaac*
 - the Romans *laid the wood* of the cross on **Jesus** and He carried it part of the way up to Mt. Calvary (John 19:17)
 - then at the place of sacrifice, Isaac was "*laid upon the wood*" bound with ropes
 - and we remember how Jesus was stretched out on the wooden cross & bound there with nails

- the original drama on Mt. Moriah shows **Isaac's** own willingness to **submit** to his father's will
...would otherwise have been very difficult for 117 yr old Abraham to subdue & tie up 17 yr old Isaac!

- Isaac here is a picture of Christ's submissive obedience to His Father

Ps 40:6-8

Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;

My ears You have opened.

Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

⁷ Then I said, "Behold, I come;

In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.

⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God,

And Your law *is* within my heart."

- the **dramatic** effect of the narrative is heightened by use of word "**son**" 10 times (in the Hebrew; 13 in English)!

- i.e. there is a strong **parental love** infusing this story

- Bible's **first** recorded words of **Isaac** to Abraham are: "[my] father" (vs. 7)

- Bible's **last** recorded words of **Abraham** to Isaac are in the very next verse: "my son" (vs. 8)

- Heb. 11:17 tells us: "He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice *his one and only son*"

- the identical Greek term is used in that most famous of all Bible verses, John 3:16 – "God so loved the world that he gave... *his one and only son*"

...in Abraham's emotions we get a glimpse of the **Father God's pain** as His only Son is placed on the 'wood' of the cross, in the hills of "Moriah", 2000 yrs later

- and we get a glimpse of God's profound **love** for mankind

- He provided a substitute for *Abraham's son* Isaac, but there was no substitute for *His own Son* at the cross

- Rom. 8:32 says, "*Since he did not spare even his own Son for us but gave him up for us all, won't he also surely give us everything else?*"

- let's go back to Martin Luther's version of the story once again:

"... The father raised his knife; the boy did not wince. The angel cried, "Abraham, Abraham!" See how divine majesty is at hand in the hour of death. **We** say, "In the midst of *life* we die." **God** answers, "Nay, in the midst of *death* we live."

...the willing sacrifice of God the Father and the obedient submission of God the Son resulted in the death that provided eternal life for us

- "He **died** for us so that... we may **live** together with him." (1 Thess. 5:10)

The second thing we see under “Proving Jehovah’s Faithfulness” is...

2. Affirmation – a proof of Abraham’s faith & God’s faithfulness

- specifically, the **covenant** blessing is reaffirmed

Gen 22:16-18

"By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son* – ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

- over the previous 4 decades, God had given & confirmed to Abraham the promises involving the land, descendants and blessing
 - now here He reaffirms esp. the “blessing” climaxing in the promise of this blessing to “all **nations** on earth” through the offspring of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God
- i.e. Abraham’s testing was not in vain; there was a reward in the end – the promise was reconfirmed
- if you had asked C.T. **Studd** on his deathbed in the heart of Africa, “Was it worth it?” his answer would certainly have been “yes” – in addition to many who came to faith in Christ through his ministry there were literally hundreds who responded to God’s missionary call as a result of his example
- if you had asked Elizabeth **Elliot** in the jungle of Ecuador, now a widow left to look after her little daughter alone, “Was it worth it?”, her answer would surely have been “yes” – thousands of missionaries trace the impetus for their response to God right back to the death of Jim Elliot & his 4 missionary partners; my wife & I are among them
- if you had asked **Abraham** back in Beersheba, “Was it worth it – all that emotional trauma and stretching to the limit?” – his answer too would have been “absolutely yes” – “God is no man’s debtor”

Earlier we had asked, “How do WE measure up?” – now we ask...

How does GOD measure up?

- Abraham is seen/proven to be “faithful”
 - but much more than that, the **LORD** is found **faithful** – He “provides”
 - Brueggemann wrote, “God is the one who **tests** (and *takes* from his people) and the one who **provides** (and *gives* what is needed for a future).”
- the God who *tested* them, and who puts us to the test too, is also *Jehovah-jireh* – the faithful God who **provides**, who “gives what is needed for a future”
 - 1 Cor 1:9 tells us, “God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is **faithful**.”
 - and 1Thes 5:24 affirms: “**Faithful** is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”

- God's faithful provision is supremely seen in the **cross** of Christ – the ultimate gift of ultimate love for our ultimate need
- and we respond to such a giving God with sacrificial obedience
- Isaac Watts, the hymnwriter, put it this way:
 - “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”