

The Cross anticipated Genesis 22:1-19

- ✚ In our study today we will focus on the three main characters of the text: God, Abraham and Isaac
- ✚ Whereas the cross is not mentioned in this text, we will use Genesis 22 to address our theme
- ✚ As we follow the text, am praying that God will help each of us to examine our own relationship with God, especially as we focus on Abraham and Isaac
- ✚ With all this in mind we will address ourselves to four main points

1.0 First we note parallels between Abraham's son and the Son of God

*2 "Take your son," He said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a * burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." Genesis 22:2*

"...you have not withheld your only son from Me" Genesis 22:12

In this story, Isaac is a type of the one who hang on the Cross, especially with regard to his relationship to the father:

16 "For God so loved the world,⁹ that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17

✚ Isaac was laid on the altar and was about to be slaughtered before the angel told Abraham not to slaughter him

✚ Jesus hanged on the cross as God's own Son, and was also the lamb that was slain to take away the sins of the world.

The message of 'the cross anticipated' comes out more clearly when we consider a few more verses from the broader Scripture:

18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from the fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20 He was chosen before the

foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the times for you ²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. 1 Peter 1:18-21 HCSB

- ✚ Here we read that Christ was chosen before the foundations of the world
- ✚ Before Jesus' death on Calvary's hill, God had a plan for our redemption and that entailed shedding of the blood of His Son on the cross.

Those of you who love Bill Gaither Music might have heard that song sung by Murrell Ewing, "He saw me", in their album, *Rivers of Joy*

On the balcony of space, stepped a pure and holy god,
And in all solitude, he stood alone.
Not one faint star to give him light, just endless rolling blackest night.
But somehow through all the darkness, he could see.

He saw mountains high and lofty,

He saw valleys lush and green,

He saw babbling brooks wildflowers growing, even heard a robin sing.

But he felt a strange compassion as close to love as pain can be,
standing out there, in his tomorrow, He saw me.

He saw me in his likeness, He saw me just like him.

Pure, clean, and holy, spotless white within.

But he saw me bound in heavy chains and longed to set me free,
but He knew if I could become like him, He must become like me.

[Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe, sin had left the crimson stain,
He washed me white as snow].

The Cross was the only way for humanity to be reconciled to God.

2.0 The journey to Moriah, the place of sacrifice

- Prior to this test, Abraham had been called from his people to be a follower of Yahweh (Genesis 12, Joshua 24)
- On this occasion Abraham heard God call His name - it was not to be business as usual
- God demanded for Isaac, Abraham's child of promise. To give God his son, meant to sacrifice Isaac himself, to take a knife, kill his son on God's altar
- Some travelling was required - three days of travelling. Some tasks are hard/tough yet they are easy to deal with if done immediately. They seem to get harder as time goes by.
 - Like that dreaded surgery
 - Like that confession you must make of an embarrassing wrong.
- Just imagine what went through his mind as he travelled towards this place of sacrifice
- Note also that Isaac was grown up, meaning that a relationship had developed between them
- Also remember that Isaac was God's promise to Abraham, an answer to prayer

What was this test about?

- i. Was this a test for degree of attachment? Was Abraham getting too attached to this son? We cannot know for sure. But from our own experience we know how we get attached to things God gives us. For example,
- Before someone gets a car, they can take a taxi to church or for a ministry trip. But when they get a car, and it happens to break down for some reason, then they cannot go to church because the car has a problem.
 - It might be a part-time work opportunity, where you have a choice to sign up for Sundays or not. Then we end up signing up for all the Sundays because we want to make some extra money, forgetting that the Lord we worship is the one who opened that door.
- ii. Was this a test for replacement, that Abraham had replaced God's place with Isaac? Again we cannot know for sure. But we know brethren whose love for God was fervent until they fell in love with someone. Brothers whose only pursuit was once to please the Lord until they got connected to people in high places. Now they will do anything to please their bosses even when it is against the will of God.

- iii. In this case, Abraham exhibits a kind of obedience which does not question God. **It is like in the movie COURAGEOUS where this man who is due for promotion is tested on whether he can be an accomplice to siphoning company funds.**
- iv. Abraham's went on a voluntary journey to the place of sacrifice - did he think about turning back?

He Chose Me

There were so many others that

He might have chosen, to follow Him

Others with learning and greater distinction, to follow Him

Men with authority and forceful ability

Who know how to speak and be heard

I don't know exactly why I'm here at all

But today, I follow my Lord

It was business as usual that day til I heard Him say, follow me

I left all behind me when Jesus said, follow me

I emptied myself of my old life completely

With no thought that this could be wrong

And as long as I follow the steps of the Master

I know I'm where I belong

For He chose me, He chose me

I could not say no when He said follow me

And you'll be a fisher of men

And from now on, and from now on

I will not look back on the things left behind

He chose me to follow Him

We must equally consider God's journey to the cross

- God knew that to redeem humanity, He had to become human. He had to become like one of His creation.
- God knew that he had to yield his life in the hands of sinners. He had to give himself to the justice system of sinners.
- God knew that He being holy had to bear the sins of the world
- That journey culminated in the Son of God crying out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Yet we know that Jesus did this voluntarily

14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I

lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” John 10:14-18

The journey to the cross was not easy, yet Jesus was willing to take it.

3.0 Additional observations from our text

Isaac learned about worship from his father Abraham

- We see Isaac asking his father about the sacrifice, he says, “I am carrying the wood but where is the sacrifice?” This implies that Abraham had modelled to his son what it means to worship the LORD.
- We see Isaac yielding to his father to be sacrificed. He yielded to a 100+ man because he had learnt that when God demands a sacrifice, the best thing to do is to say yes.
- The lesson for the believer is that of yielding to the will of God. Letting God have His way in your life.

Would you agree if the Lord said to you, 'do not defend yourself in this matter'?

God provided the sacrifice

- Abraham had told Isaac that the Lord will provide
- A lamb was provided in the place of Isaac
- This act was a shadow of the Lamb which would be provided on Calvary's hill
- It is important to note that death had to happen: God says to Abraham, you have stood the test, yet a lamb has to die.

The Bible says,

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Romans 5:6-10

4.0 Major Lessons for the believer

What do we learn about discipleship?

- i. Following Jesus may take you through experiences which are not comfortable
- ii. The candle of hope should never be blown out because with God there are no "points of no return".

What do we learn about God?

- i. He wants us to love Him above all else
- ii. He is committed to our redemption

Conclusion

Each of us was destined to the slaughter altar like Isaac. Just like God provided a lamb in the place of Isaac, on the cross God gave his only begotten Son in our place.

Jesus is the descendant of Abraham, "through whom all the nations of the earth are blessed" (Vs 18)

Application: Let us know that *God* cares, and that *He* is committed to our salvation.