

Where is the Lamb?

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Date: 23 October 2016

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[0 : 00] Well, I'd like us to turn again to the passage of the Old Testament, the book of Genesis, and at chapter 22.

Genesis chapter 22, reading again at verse 7. And Isaac said to his father, Abraham, my father, and he said, Here am I, my son.

He said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? Abraham said, God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.

So they went, both of them, together. This story of Abraham and Isaac is really much more than a mere story.

It's in the form of a parable. As the Lord Jesus Christ told parables in the New Testament, this story also of Abraham and Isaac is a parable foreshadowing the great story of redemption that God the Father effected with his own son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 29] And the story begins all the way back in Genesis chapter 3, where God has a controversy with Adam and Eve because of their disobedience.

And the promise that he gave there was that the seed of the woman shall crush the head of the seed of the serpent.

Amity had been established between mankind and Satan. And because of that enmity which had been established, there was also a controversy that was occasioned between God and mankind. And that controversy became the reason of the separation between God and mankind when Adam and Eve were put out of the garden of Eden.

And there was an angel put there with a sword to guard the way to the tree of life, which proclaims the way to life everlasting.

[2 : 41] Now, as we read this particular narrative, we can see what a huge test, how severe this test was for Abraham.

We're told of the command that God gave him, take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah and offer him there or a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will tell you of.

Now, here is a man who left earth, we call these, at the request of God to go into a place that he knew not, to go to a place he knew nothing about, and yet he goes obediently.

Now, up to this point, really, in the narrative, Adam, or Abraham, should I say, had received a very great promise of God.

He was childish in his own latter stage of life, as was his wife, and God had provided them with a son, Isaac. And in that son, all the promises of God, and the offspring of Abraham, or the future of Abraham's seed, was contained in Isaac.

[4 : 11] And here was that long-looked-for child, and he appeared after God Abraham and Isaac received that promise of God.

And we're told, after all these things, after Isaac had grown up, after he'd become a young man, and matured into manhood, after all these things, God again came to test Abraham, to test his faith, and his love for God alone.

We see there in the narrative, when God says to Abraham, do not lay your hand upon the boy, or anything, do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God.

You have not withheld your son. Maybe there was something in Abraham's life, which was causing him to dote on his son. In the same way as Eli doted on his sons, allowing them to sin so severely, in the temple there in Shiloh, maybe Abraham was going down that same line, and God wanted to see where Abraham's real duty, and real obedience lay.

And so, we have here, this test of Abraham's obedience, as to what sort of man he still was. And so, Abraham, in believing God, reckoned not on us, the infirmity of his own age, or the badness of Sarah's womb.

[5 : 52] But he waited, patiently, for the promise that God had given him. That his seed, would be established on the earth, they would be, as memorable, as the stars in the sky, and as the sand on the seashore.

And, we can, but only imagine, how much love, and affection, he poured out on his son Isaac, when he was eventually born.

Remember, Abraham was, about 100 years of age, and his wife, possibly 90 years of age. And when they received this son, this longed for son, no doubt they doted on him, no doubt they, treated him with the fondest love.

And, as I said, in Isaac, were all the promises of God established. And, so, we have here, after all, the, tests, and trials, that Abraham has had, along life's journey, he has these days, when he thinks everything is going to, be easy, there's going to be no more trials, no more difficulties, and then suddenly, this greatest of, all trials, occur.

After all these things, after these things, after his whole life, of difficulties, of moving land, and, and going to a place he did not know, having waited years, before, his, his son, God, tested Abraham, and asked him to offer up, his son, his only son, whom, he loved.

[7 : 41] to kill his only son, to cut off, the promises, of the posterity, that he hoped for, and to sacrifice, his son, as a burnt offering, to God.

Now, as I said, this is, a parable, of, what, the Lord, effected, in the Lord Jesus Christ, in, the story, of, salvation.

Abraham, here, is cast, in, the, the part, of the Father, and, Isaac, is cast, in the part, of, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, there is this, great, act, being, worked out, for us, here, and, for our salvation. And what we have to do here, is, to mark, the faith, of Abraham.

That's the first thing we see here, in this narrative. The faith, Abraham, has in God. We see it, first of all, when he leaves, his own country, earth, the Chaldees, and goes, into the land of Canaan.

[8 : 51] Going to a land, that he would, inhabit, and inherit, and yet, that he knew nothing about. God had said, I would take you to a land, which, which I will give to you, and to your seed after you.

And yet, he knows nothing of the land, and yet, he goes, in faith, believing, that God had called him, to go there. And after all these years, he is, suddenly given, this, particular, test, from God.

We can imagine, his own, emotions, during the night, before he set out. Did he tell, Sarah, we don't know, we're not told.

He certainly, hadn't told Isaac, what was going to happen. All we're told is, that, Abraham rose, early in the morning, saddled his donkey, took two of his, young men with him, and, Isaac, his son. And all the preparations, were made, for that journey. The wood was cut, the knife was prepared, the, fire was taken, in his hand.

[10 : 00] And so, they set off, on this journey. Three days journey, from, land where they were living, into, the land of, Moriah. Now, for those of you, who know, Jerusalem, where the temple mount is, if you've been inside, what's called, the dome on the rock there, a shrine, which, Islam has built over, the rock.

That is the place, where, it is believed, that Abraham went, to offer the sacrifice. The place, where, he bound his son, and laid him, on that rock, to, offer him up.

And, down through the centuries, after that, that's where, the sacrifices, were made, and, the temple ritual. Because, that's also where, the temple stood, in the old, dispensation.

But, we have here, the story of, Abraham, going, from, where he's lived, where he, he, sojourned, to be told, in the last, verse of the previous chapter, many days, in the land, of the Philistines.

But, he's told to go, to the land of Moriah, Mount Sinai, as we would, call it today. And, sorry, not Mount Sinai, Mount Zion, as we would call it today.

[11 : 21] Mount Sinai, is the land, is the mountain, upon which, Moses, received, the ten commandments, from God. Mount Zion, is the place, where, the Old Testament, calls, Mount Moriah.

And so, Abraham, goes with his son, he goes to this land, where, he has been, told, to offer up, his son Isaac. And as he goes, no doubt, walking for three days, the conversation, would have ranged,

over, over many topics.

But there's, one topic, that, Isaac, wants, to know about. He cuts the wood, for the burnt offering, and went to the place, which God had told him of.

And on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place, from afar. Again, for three days, they'd be walking. For three days, Abraham, Abraham knows, what God has asked him to do. For three days, he's continuing there, in faith, believing that, even if he carries out, what God has asked him to do, God is able to raise, Isaac from the dead.

[12 : 33] Now we can say, perhaps, oh that's alright then, if Isaac is going to be, brought back from the dead, there's, there's going to be, no great difficulty for Abraham. But can you imagine, a father, being asked, to offer up a son, to kill his son, with a knife, and to offer him up, as a burnt offering.

The emotions of Abraham, must have been, severe at this particular time. As all the thoughts, and all the emotions, go through his, his mind, and no doubt, his heart is breaking, is what God, has asked him to do.

And as they reach, the land of Moriah, Abraham says to his young men, now, you stay here, with the donkey, and I will go over there, to the mountain, and worship, and come again to you.

He's so confident, that he is going to come back, he says to the young men there, we're going to go away, and we're going to come back, to you again, together.

So we're told, they went, both of them, together. And as they go, Isaac, asked his father, here, here, here, here, here, here, is, the fire, and the wood, but where is the lamb, for the burnt offering?

[13 : 50] I don't know, that many questions, had been going through, Isaac's, mind on this, this journey, three days, they've been walking, as I said, many things, their conversation, was arranged over many things, but obviously, it hadn't, hadn't ranged on this particular aspect, of, of the sacrifice, that was going to be made.

And, but when they're alone, Isaac asks his father, where is the lamb, for the burnt offering? And then, Abraham has, Abraham says something, that, we can suppose, that's even beyond, his deepest understanding, as close as he, as he was to God, he says, God will provide, for himself, the lamb, for the burnt offering.

Now, in the, in the whole, mystery of salvation, the lamb, that God, provides for the burnt offering, is, his own lamb, the lamb, that was slain, from the foundation, of the world, the lamb of God, who bears away, the sin of the world.

But, Abraham didn't know, of that, when he was going, to Mount Moriah. He was going there, simply in obedience, to God's command.

And as he goes, no doubt, he's pondering these things, and he's, he's wondering, what's going to happen? But, he knows he's going there, in obedience, to God's command, and he's going there, acknowledging, he must carry out, the request, of the test, God has given him to do, to offer up his son, a sacrifice.

[15 : 29] And so, as they go, they come to the place, of which, they are told, which God had told, Abraham about. And Abraham, built there, an altar, no doubt, with the help of Isaac.

And they gather wood, for, that altar, and, the scene is set. The scene is set, there, for, the next, phase, of what's, going to happen.

What we see, in the next phase, is Isaac's, obedience, to his father. We see Abraham's faith, his total dependence, upon God, upon what God, has commanded him to do, his total faith, that God is able, to raise Isaac, from the dead, if he has to, go through and kill him, as he expects, so to do. But then we see also, Isaac's, obedience. The obedience, of a son, who does exactly, what his father, asked him to do.

Isaac would have been, a grown man, by this time. Possibly, people reckon, perhaps he was the same age, as the Lord Jesus Christ. 33 years of age, when the Lord, was offered up, on the cross.

[16 : 42] So here is, Isaac, having, carried, the instrument, of his, his own death, the wood on his back, even as the Lord, carried, the cross on his back, to the crucifixion.

Here is Isaac, carrying that wood, with him, up there, he builds the altar, lays the wood, on, the stone built altar, and then Abraham, tells him, what God has commanded him, to do.

And so Isaac, in total, obedience, and trust, and trust, in his father, does what his father, asks him to do. It is, a story, that's, almost, beyond our understanding, as we try and imagine, not only the emotions, of Abraham, but also, the emotions, of Isaac, as he, lies down on the altar, as he is bound, and as his father, takes up, that knife, to slay, his son.

And here we have, that picture, of, the Lord Jesus Christ, also. He is, on the cross, waiting, to be killed, as, a divine sacrifice, so that you and I, might be saved.

We have here, this, this whole, understanding, of what is going on, in the cross, as we look here, at this, story, of Abraham, and Isaac.

[18:17] When they arrive, when they arrive, at this particular point, it's Abraham, who takes up the knife. We can imagine, the emotion, we can imagine, perhaps, even tears, in his eyes, as, he commits himself, to do, what he's going to do.

The knife is raised, he raises the knife. And he, is about, to plunge that knife, into, the breast, of his son, having committed himself, to doing this act, when the voice, cries out to him, Abraham, lay, not, your hand, upon, this boy, or do anything to him.

For now, I know, that you fear God, and, you have not withheld, your son, your only son, from me.

And so, we have here, this, this whole aspect, of faith, and trust, and obedience, in this family.

Faith, going back to the time, when Abraham leaves, or the Chaldees, to come to Canaan. Faith, and trust, there's Abraham, goes to Moriah, the land of Moriah, and Mount Moriah, to offer up his son, obedience, and trust, also, his father, in Isaac, obeying his, his father, and becoming, the sacrifice, that God, had told Abraham, to commit.

No doubt, in the whole conversation, in this discussion, of who God is, and, and what God, has asked him to do, there would have been, a great, depth of, of faith, that God, is able to do that.

[19:55] No doubt, Abraham communicated, to Isaac, God is able, to raise you, from the dead, even if I kill you, even from your ashes, he is able, to raise you, from the dead, in a way, that speaks, of our own resurrection, as one day, we shall be raised, from the dead, even as, Isaac, trusted, that God, was able, to raise him, from the dead, so also, that's what we believe, that this life, is but a precursor, to the time, when, we, shall be raised, incorruptible, from the dead, to be with the Lord, throughout the endless, ages, of glory, and so, we have here then, this, this great, understanding, of, of what is happening, and Abraham, also lifts up his eyes, and looks, after he, steps away, from his son, after he, he lowers the knife, he turns around, and looks, and says, behold, there was a ram, caught, in his thicket, and by the horns, and Abraham went, and took the ram, and offered him up, as, a burnt offering, instead, of his son, as we look at, this, substitution, that's going on here, on Mount Moriah, we see the substitution, that affects, us, on Golgotha, the place, of the skull, the place of the cross, where the Lord Jesus Christ, has offered up, for us, see when the Lord, raises his knife, on Calvary, on Golgotha, there's no one, to say to him, lay not, your hand, upon the lad, do not touch him, all he hears, is his own voice, saying, arise, so sword, against my shepherd, against the man, of my right hand, and slay him, and Christ, is slain,

Christ, is, offered up, as sacrifice, for divine justice, people say, how could, God have, slaughtered, his innocent son, how could, God have allowed, that to happen, when he had done, nothing wrong, but the whole plan, of salvation, was caught up, in this one, particular act, that, God had, so arranged, the salvation, of the world, that this was the only way, he could guarantee, your salvation, and mine, if we go back again, to the creation, Adam and Eve, were given, a will, whereby they, would, obey God, they had, they had an inclination, to obey God's will, and so walk with them, but the first sign, of temptation, that comes along, they, they fall, from that obedience, and, they become, disobedient to God, and so, no separation, from God, and animosity, from God, toward them, and so, that would have happened, to each and every one of us, if we'd all been born, innocent, with the will, desiring to do God's will, throughout, all our days, yet we also, would have fallen, to the same, temptation, that they had fallen to, the temptation, of course, was to, to be like God, to know good and evil, to be, as, they were tempted by us, we attempted, every day, of our lives, to see the fruit, to know, that it was, good, to look at, to know, it was, good, to taste, and it was desirable, to make, us wise, and so we think, all the experiences, that, are in this life, are something, we should taste, we've got to live life, to the full, we can't just live, in our, in our cloistered, churches, or our cloistered, houses, and don't experience, the world in which we live, but that's just a temptation, that the devil throws at us, you must go out, and experience life, you can't just, live the life, that the Bible says, you are to live, and so, we would have fallen, just as much, into temptation, that,

Adam and Eve, succumbed to, and so God makes, the only way, of salvation, the only way, he can guarantee, a salvation, for men and women, to be with him, throughout the endless, ages of eternity, and that is to send, his only son, into this world, to seek and to save, the lost, and to give his life, for ransom, for the many, he gives his life, so that you and I, might never know, the second

death, that spiritual death, which would, separate us from God, throughout the endless, ages of eternity, and the offer of salvation, is there, for us, the offer of salvation, is there, that we might, accept it, we might realize, what God has done, he, offered up, the son of his love, my, beloved son, in whom I am well pleased, he offered him up, so that, we, might, be saved, and that's why Abraham, here says, God, will provide, himself, or for himself, a lamb, for a burnt offering, so he doesn't provide, a ram, a lamb, or a ram, he provides, the man, Christ Jesus, and that's why I said, this is a parable, the parable, here is a story, which defines, what in fact, happens, on the cross, it's described, here in a simple way, in the story, of Abraham and Isaac, in the story, of God the father, and God the son, is in fact, acted out, in reality, acted out, so that you and I, might know, the great, plan of salvation, in our own experience, and so, on the Lord, offering up, his son, he, we have here, a vivid picture, of, what, was required, of Christ, that we might be saved, he, went to the cross, knowing, that, he, must, die, in the same way, as Isaac, was obedient, to his father, Abraham, he could have resisted, his father, he was strong, and able, Abraham by this time, no doubt, was old, and feeble, Isaac could have, resisted, and so, not, gone through, with this, whole, planned, scenario, the Lord, Jesus Christ, when he's tempted, by those around him, let him prove, that he's the son of God, let him come down, of course, he could have come down, of course, he could have, negated this whole plan, but that would have, left you and me, without any salvation, without any hope, of an eternity, a saved eternity, but Christ, had to go through, with, this great, plan of salvation, so that you and I, might be saved, he allowed himself, to be bound, he subjected himself, to all the, the, the wickedness, of those, that surrounded him, subjected himself, to all, the wickedness, of those, who mocked him, and struck him, and eventually, crucified him, he permitted, that to happen to him, he had no reason, to allow himself, to do it, yet he permits himself, to do it, he allows, sorry, to do it, to him, so that, you and I, might be saved, in the new testament, we're told the Lord, in the gospel of John,

[27 : 41] I think chapter 8, Abraham, saw my day, and rejoiced in it, as Abraham, goes through, this whole act, of obedience, he, gets an understanding, understanding, of what God, is going to do, for the children of men, and he gets it there, in this, this whole, promise, that God, makes, to him, I will surely bless you, and I will multiply, your offspring, as the stars of heaven, and as I stand, on the seashore, and your offspring, shall possess, the gate of his enemies, and in, your offspring, shall all, nations, of the earth, be blessed, because, you have, obeyed, my voice, Abraham, sees, God's day, Abraham, sees, Christ's day, and the sacrifice, that Christ, is going to make, because, he has, obeyed God, all nations, of the earth, will be blessed, through his offspring, as, the genealogies, New Testament, revealed to us, the Lord Jesus Christ, is of, the seed, and of the lineage, not only of David, but also, of Abraham himself, and so, this, this great story, here, is not just a story, it pictures for us, the work, and the ministry, of the Lord Jesus Christ, in coming to this earth, and to give his life, a ransom, for the many, when, we see, that, Abraham's hand, is stayed, or prevented, from, doing, this act, of obedience, we can, see it once, that the whole, act of obedience, is, is incomplete, the ram, is caught, in the thicket, the ram, is caught, and laid whole on, dragged out, and put into the place, of Isaac, work, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, he doesn't, provide a sacrifice, for him, he is the sacrifice, he's your substitute, and mine, he dies, spiritually, he dies, physically, so that you and I, should never have to die, spiritually, we'll never know, the experience, of Christ, on the cross, when he cries, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me, we shall never be forsaken, in that way, because of what, Christ experienced, and what he did, for you, and, for me, and what shall we say, as we, hear this narrative, we can but rejoice, in the provision, God has made, for salvation, we can rejoice, in the fact, that, our lives, are hid, with Christ, and God, but surely also, we mourn, for those, who are yet strangers, to the grace, and the mercy, that there is, in Christ Jesus, the mercy, that's extended, and rejected, the mercy, that's offered, but refused, and made to be, that, as we, we see, and somehow, in a slight way, understand, what salvation is about, and what it offers to us, that we will not reject, but we will close in, with the great offer of salvation, that is, in Christ Jesus, how, we are saved, we know, we are saved, because of what, the Lord Jesus Christ, did for us, on the cross, we, know, that he offered himself up, as a, as a, as a burnt offering, for us, and for our salvation, how are we going to, answer, our heavenly judge, when he asks us, what did you do with Christ, when you were offered, so much, what are you, going to say, when you were asked, how was it, that you refused, the great gift of love, that I offered you, where are we going to look, when, we find ourselves, accused, not only, of, unbelief, but also, hard heartedness, and rebellion, against a God,

who so loved us, you see, really the stories, about God, stories about God, the Father, he offers up his son, he is the one, who so loved the world,

John 3 16 says, God so loved the world, God the Father, so loved the world, that he offered up, his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that whosoever, believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life, whosoever, whoever you are, whatever you've done, whatever your place, has been in the world, if you, but trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, to save, a wretch, like you and like me, that we might be his, and only, here and now, but throughout the endless ages, of eternity, and may the Lord bless these thoughts to us, let us then conclude our worship, singing to God's praise, in Psalm 73, 73rd Psalm, at verse 23, page 316, nevertheless continually, O Lord, I am with thee, who dost behold by my right hand, and still upholdest me, to the end of the Psalm, six stanzas, to God's praise,

Amen. I am with thee, I am with thee, thou dost me hold up, by my right hand, and still apposed me.
[34 : 28] For with thy counsel I live with me conduct and guide and to thy glory after work receive me to abide.

O while I am in the heavens high but thee, O Lord, alone and in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none.

My flesh and heart doth fade and fail but rather fail me never.

O of my heart, God is the strength and portion forever.

For those that have found from thee far off the perish shall and I shall hold in from thee go thou hast destroyed all.

[36 : 46] But surely it is good for me that I go near to God.

In all my heart, that all my heart I may deliver on.

And now may grace, mercy and peace in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God rest on you and abide in you now and always.

Amen.