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Take Your Only Son Isaac, and Sacrifice Him as a Burnt Offering 22: 1-8

Take your only son Isaac, and sacrifice him as a burnt offering DIG: Why do you think God chose to test Abraham's faith through his son Isaac? Knowing Elohim waited twenty-five years before providing a son for Avraham, how would you expect him to react to God's instruction? Why doesn't he object? Who does Abraham say will come back down the mountain? What does this tell you about his faith in God? What other evidences of faith in God did Avraham give as he was preparing to sacrifice his son?

REFLECT: Where do you sense God is testing you now? How are you doing in the test? What are you learning from it? If Elohim asked you to surrender something or someone you loved, could you do it?

This chapter brings us to the mountain top of **Genesis**. Along with **Psalm 22** and **Isaiah 53**, it describes the significance of **Yeshua's** sacrificial death on Calvary more than any other passage in the B'rit Chadashah. **When they came to the place called the skull, they crucified him there (Luke 23:33a).**

Abraham had not heard from **God** for many years. **He** seemed to be silent. But **some time later God tested Avraham** and asked **him** to do the unthinkable **(22:1a). This word tested makes it clear that God did not intend to have Isaac sacrificed.** This is the first time the word **tested** is used in the Bible, and it would be **Avraham's** greatest **test**. **God** called out to **him, "Abraham!"** And **Abraham** replied: **Here I am (22:1b).** These words: **Here I am** (Hebrew: *hineni*) are the same words that sprang from the lips of **Jacob (Genesis 31:11),** of **Moshe (Exodus 3:4),** of **Samuel (First Samuel 3:4)**, of **Isaiah (Isaiah 6:8)**, of **Ananias (Acts 9:10)**, and innumerable servants of **God** who faithfully responded to **Him** without the slightest hesitation. **Abraham** uttered not even one objection to this call. Our faith is not really **tested** until **Elohim** asks us to bear what seems unbearable, do what seems unreasonable, and expect what

seems impossible.[352]

When **God** spoke, it seemed as though every word was meant to wound **Abraham** as deeply as possible. **God** said: **Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love (22:2a). Isaac** was not the **only son Abraham** had, but **he** was the **son** of promise, the unique **son**. As far as **God's** purposes are concerned, **He** was blind to Ishmael. So the first mention of the word **love** in **the Scriptures** calls our attention to the fact that the **love** of **a** godly **father** for **his only son** is a picture of **the love** that exists between **God the Father** and **God the Son**.

Muslims make a big deal about **Genesis** saying **your only son.** They say that it should be written, "Take your son, your only son, *Ishmael*," because when Ishmael was in his mid-teens, **Isaac** had not yet been born. The specific reason Ishmael and Hagar were sent away was because **God** only recognized **Isaac** as **the son** of promise. Their twisted reasoning is that when **Isaac** was born, **Abraham** had two sons. But they don't get the point that as far as being **the son** of promise, **God** did not recognize Ishmael, only **Isaac**. Therefore, **God** would look upon **Isaac** as **Avraham's only son**. The Muslims teach "because of chauvinism (or prejudice) the name Ishmael was changed to **Isaac** in this passage." They teach that **God** has preserved the word **only** to show them what it should have been.[353]

Abraham was called by **ADONAI** to **trust** in **His** promises throughout most of **his** adult life. Test after test came **his** way; yet **Abraham** never budged in **his faithfulness** to those divine promises. Finally, near the end of **his** life, at one-hundred and thirty-seven years old, **YHVH** told **Abraham**, *lech l'cha* (Hebrew: meaning *get yourself going*), just as **He** told **Abram to go to Canaan** (**to see link click Dt – I Will Bless Those Who Bless You and Whoever Curses You I Will Curse**). This time, instead of the command to leave **his** homeland and go to a place about which **he** did not know, **Abraham** was instructed: **Go to the region of** Mount **Moriah**, which would eventually become Mount Zion. The first command was to make *aliyah* (*to go up*) to the Promised Land. The second **Lech Lecha** was a command to come even closer to **God** – the place where **He** would dwell intimately with **His** people. If **Abraham** knew a little about **YHVH** when **he** left for Canaan, by the time **he** would leave **Moriah**, the future spiritual center of the Promised Land, **he** would be forever as intimately close to **God** as is possible for any human, short of being in the World to Come.

Then God continued: **Go to the region of Mount Moriah**, which would eventually become **Mount** Zion. The words seemed like a knife stabbing deep into

Abraham's heart. **Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering** (see the commentary on **Leviticus Ai – The Burnt Offering**) **on one of the mountains I will tell you about (22:2b).** The issue was clear. **God** was asking **Avraham**: Do you **love your son** more than **you love Me**? The principle is this: **Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength (Deuteronomy 6:4). Jesus** said: **If anyone comes to Me and loves Me** less than **his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, and yes, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:26).** If **Abraham** had laughed in **his** heart with joyful hope when **his son** was promised to **him**, how deep **his** anguish and perplexity must have been at this amazing request from the **God** who had been so good to **him**. Yet the faith that enabled **him** to believe such a staggering promise in the first place was now enough for an even more stunning demand. This **test**, then, reveals **Avraham's** obedience and faith, **Isaac's** submission, and **Elohim's** gracious provision of a substitute in **his** place.[354]

Isaac is portrayed as a type of Christ (Galatians 3:16), and the experience of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah pictures the sacrifice of Messiah on Mount Calvary (Hebrews 11:17-19). This is really the central issue of this entire chapter, if not the entire Bible: **God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all (Romans 8:32).**

"But, **ADONAI**,"**Abraham** may have thought, "that doesn't sound like **You**. **You** promised to make **Isaac** a great nation, *and **he** is not even married yet!* True, the gods of the nations around us are sometimes worshiped by the **sacrifice** of sons and daughters, and I certainly love **You** as much as these people **love** their own false gods; but this type of thing surely is not pleasing to **You**. What will happen to all **Your** promises if **You** ask this of **me**? And what about Sarah? Why, this will bring her down to the grave with grief!" Whether **Avraham** actually thought such things or not, Scriptures do not say. All we are told is that **he** obeyed **God** with no questions asked.[355] Faith obeys the Word of **God** completely.

It is one thing to claim to trust **God's** Word when waiting for something; it is quite another thing to trust and obey **His** Word after it is received. This was a test of how much **Abraham** would obey **Him**. Would **he** cling to **Isaac** now that **he** had **him**, or would **he** still obey and return **him** to **God**? In other words, how far would **Avraham** go in **his** obedience? Did **he** really believe that **God** would keep **His** word and raise the **son** of promise?[356]

The moment **Abraham** had made up **his** mind to obey **God**, **Isaac** *was dead in **his***

eyes. **He** proceeded on **his** grim task as someone making funeral arrangements, just putting one foot in front of the other. **He** did not tell **Isaac** of **his** intentions, and **he** probably did not tell Sarah either. **Early the next morning he got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac** (Hebrew: **Yitz'chak**)**. The rabbis teach that these two servants were Ishmael and Eliezar of Damascus. He** also **cut enough wood for the** sin **offering** because **he** didn't know if there would be enough when it was time for the **sacrifice**. Actually, the **servants** are not recorded as doing *anything*. They are merely there. When all was ready, the four of them **set out for the place God had told him about (22:3).**

Because **he** was old, **Avraham** rode a **donkey**, while **Isaac** and the **two servants** walked. The journey took a full **two** days and part of a **third**. The total distance was about fifty miles from **Beersheba**. **Abraham** traveled in silent resignation. There is not a single word of conversation recorded. ***On the third day* He looked up and saw the place in the distance (22:4). He** instinctively realized that **he** and **Yitz'chak** needed to travel the rest of the way by themselves. **He said to his two servants, "Stay here with the donkey while my son and I go over there." The two thieves on the cross were not permitted to see what transpired between the Father and the Son, and neither are the two servants**.

For all practical purposes, **Isaac** was **raised** from the dead ***on the third day***, **which is the heart of the Gospel: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (First Cor 15:3b-4). According to what Scriptures? Paul was talking about the TaNaKh. But where does it picture Jesus being raised on the third day? Jesus Himself talks about His death and resurrection being the sign of Jonah (Lk 11:29), because Jonah spent three days in the belly of a whale and was raised from the dead** (see my commentary on **Jonah Au – Jonah's Prayer**)**.** And also here, **figuratively speaking, Abraham** received **Isaac back from** the dead **on the third day.**

Then **Abraham** said: **We will worship and then we will come back to you. (22:5). He** wasn't lying to the **two servants**. **Abraham** had faith that **he** and **Isaac** would both return because **God** had promised **him** a **son**. **God** had told **him** that **Isaac** would become a great nation, in whom all the nations of the world would be blessed. If **he** were dead, none of that would come to pass. **Abraham** had learned long ago that **God** was a promise keeper. But how about

Avraham's statement that **he** and **Isaac** were going to **worship**? Could sacrificing **Isaac** be considered **worship**? Yes, because to **worship** simply means *to bow down.* To worship **God** is simply to *bow down* to **His** will, recognizing and acknowledging that **His** will is best for our lives. What **He** does is right, whether we understand it now or not. **His** will may involve waiting and suffering, even dying; but if it is **His** will, then we must *bow down* to it and accept it with thanksgiving. I do not underestimate how difficult this is, but it is then, and only then, that we **worship God**. Not understanding, but believing, **Abraham** and **Isaac** were willing to do **His** will. **This submission to God's will in an ultimate act of worship pictures beautifully the work of Christ on the cross. Jesus said: My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as you will (Matthew 26:39).**[357]

Avraham took the wood for the sin offering and placed it on his son Isaac. Isaac carried **the wood** for **his sacrifice** up to Mount **Moriah**, **just as the cross was placed on Christ as He carried it up to Mount Calvary (John 19:17)**. **And Isaac himself carried the fire and the knife (22:6a). The fire** symbolizes divine judgment. It was first seen in **a flaming sword** that was placed in **the garden of Eden** to make sure that Adam and Eve could make it back to **the tree of life** under the right conditions **(3:24)**. It will last be seen in **the lake of fire**, where the beast and the false prophet will be thrown **(Revelation 20:14-15)**. **Divine judgment would be satisfied on Calvary when every claim of God's holiness and justice are satisfied, so that He is set free to act on behalf of sinners.**

As the two of them went on together, Isaac went willingly with his **father**. This was no child. **Isaac** was a grown man of about 30 years old. **He** was in **his** prime and about to be married. No doubt **he** was much stronger than **Abraham** and could have easily escaped if **he** had wanted. At some point **he** had to have known what

his father had in mind. **He** knew what a sin **offering** was. **They** were carrying **the wood**, **the fire** and **the knife**, but there was no animal to **sacrifice**. **Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and the wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the sin offering" (22:6b-7)?** An honest question deserved an honest answer.

Abraham answered: **My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for the** sin **offering (22:8a KJV). God alone could provide that which would satisfy Himself.** Shortly after this there was a **ram** that was **caught in a thicket**, and **Abraham** would take **the ram and sacrificed it as a sin offering (22:13)**. **Avraham** says here that **God will provide Himself a lamb.** But there was no **lamb**; there was **a ram**, *and that is an important point*. **The lamb was not provided until centuries later when John the Baptist would point to Yeshua and say: Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). God provided Himself as that lamb. It is very important to see that Abraham was speaking prophetically here.**[358] **Isaac** does not respond and was silent before **his sacrifice just as Messiah was silent before His.**

And the two of them went on together (22:8b). The **two servants** could only accompany them to within sight of Mount **Moriah.** This was going to be between **the father** and **the son**, between **Abraham** and **Isaac**. **And likewise, God shut man out at the cross. At noontime, darkness covered the entire earth for three hours, while God the Father poured out His wrath on God the Son** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Lv – Jesus' Second Three Hours on the Cross: The Wrath of God**). **Peter said it like this: He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness (First Peter 2:24a; Second Corinthians 5:21). But it was between the Father and the Son on that cross. Man was outside and did not participate at all.** The picture is the same here.[359]

Therefore, God the Father did not force His Son to die on the cross. The reason My Father loves Me is that I lay down My life, only to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father (John 10:17-18). It was the Father's will, and the Son willingly obeyed. And because the two of them went on together, lost sinners like you and me can be forgiven of our sins and receive eternal life.