

In search of...



Truth & Right

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The Offering of Isaac

God appears to Abraham for the purpose of testing him. The Lord God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on a mountain that God would later show him. This had to have caused much confusion in the mind of Abraham. Isaac was the child through whom God said many descendants would come. These descendants would form a great nation and inherit the land of Canaan. How could these promises be fulfilled if Isaac died? Also, we know that God abhors human sacrifices (Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5). Since God does not change, we can

assume that Abraham was aware of God's feelings on this matter. Every reasonable thought would lead Abraham to question God's command.

What Abraham could not know is that God's commandment would parallel a greater event in the future when God gave His own Son to be the sacrifice on behalf of the world. Notice how God described Abraham's love for Isaac and notice how it parallels God's own love for His Son (John 17:24).

Instead of questioning God's sanity, Abraham goes immediately

to fulfill the commandment. Looking at Hebrews 11:17-19, we learn how Abraham had the courage to do what God had asked of him. Since God said earlier that it was specifically through Isaac that His promises would be fulfilled, Abraham reasoned that the all-powerful God could still fulfill His promises by raising Isaac from the dead. Now Abraham's conclusion was wrong as to God's intent, but we see the strength of Abraham's faith. Abraham did not doubt that God was going to fulfill his promises that He had made to Abraham.

The place chosen for the sacrifice was about 50 miles from Abraham's home. It took Abraham three days to reach the place. The journey gave Abraham three days to change his mind, but he did not relent. The place chosen was not arbitrary. It was a mountain called Moriah. Moriah is only mentioned in one other place in our Bibles -- II Chronicles 3:1. This is the place where God appeared to David on the threshing floor. Later, this was the same place where Solomon built the temple. And a long time later, it was on this same mountain that God's only Son was sacrificed outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem.

In preparing for the journey, Abraham brings everything he needs for the sacrifice. He doesn't give himself any excuse to delay fulfilling God's command. Two servants

accompanied Abraham to the mountain, but they were told to stay at the base of the mountain. Perhaps, Abraham was making sure he would not be hindered in making the sacrifice. However, notice that Abraham told the servants that both he and Isaac would return to them. Abraham did not believe Isaac would stay dead on the mountain.

Isaac carried the wood for the sacrificial fire up the mountain. This shows that Isaac is no longer a small child. He was old enough to climb a mountain with a large load of wood on his back. Most people estimate that Isaac was probably in his late teens or early twenties at this time. Notice the parallel to the sacrifice of Christ. Isaac carried the wood for his own sacrifice just as Jesus bore the cross beam to his own sacrifice.

Abraham bears the fire and the knife for the sacrifice, but Isaac wonders where the actual sacrifice was at. Abraham prophetically states that God would provide a sacrifice. Abraham avoids telling Isaac about God's command, perhaps to keep Isaac from running off. Yet once the altar is built and the wood is laid out, Abraham binds Isaac and places him on the altar. Even though Isaac was strong enough to carry the wood up the mountain, and even though he was surely strong enough to resist a man well over 100 years old, there is no mention of any resistance on Isaac's part. Similarly, Jesus

could have called on ten thousand angels to deliver him, but he went quietly to his own sacrifice.

Before Abraham gives the killing blow with his knife, God stops the sacrifice. He waited until Abraham fully committed himself to prove that Abraham fully intended to obey God. God praises Abraham's devotion, which mirrors God's own devotion (John 3:16, I John 4:9-11). Abraham's devotion was to the God who loved him. God's devotion was to the people He created, the people who rejected Him. Throughout these events we see the strength of Abraham's faith in the things that he did (James 2:21-24).

God provides a ram for the sacrifice, as Abraham had predicted. Because of this, Abraham named the region "God will provide." Eventually, God provided the true lamb for the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the world.

After this great sacrifice on Abraham's part, God gives Abraham the strongest promise that He can give. God swears an oath backed by Himself, since there is nothing greater (Hebrews 6:13-18). Through the sacrifice of Jesus, we learn from God's actions the greatness of His love for us (Matthew 10:37). The promise to Abraham mentions the blessing of the nations through his seed and not seeds. Paul mentions this to prove that God was referring to Christ and not the nation of Israel (Galatians

3:16).

Time marches on and we learn that Sarah dies at the age of 127. This would mean that Isaac is now 37 years of age and Abraham is 137 years of age. We also find that Abraham was now dwelling in Hebron, having left the Philistine country. The time of Sarah's death occurred while Abraham was away from his home. Abraham returned to his tents to mourn the passing of his wife. Abraham's love for Sarah shows that she is a great example of womanhood for the women of today (I Peter 3:1-6).

Abraham insists on burying Sarah in land that he owned. Until this time, Abraham only dwelt as a foreigner in the land of Canaan (Hebrews 11:9). Abraham had not purchased any land up to this point. We have the negotiations for the land recorded for us. It is amazing for many of us to see the intricate way the negotiations were done. Each party makes generous offers, offering more than what has been requested. They settle the deal by being "forced" into accepting an offer that was less than originally given. How differently we make deals today!

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Paul's Sufferings

G R E A T E R E M V L R K M L Y Z Z D Q
Q L B X P T I A X C E A J S W L X C P V
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- Paul said that he was speaking like a madman (2 Cor. 11:23)
- He had far greater labors (vs. 23)
- Far more imprisonments, with countless beatings (vs. 23)
- Five times he received forty lashes less one (vs. 24)
- Three time he was beaten with rods (vs. 25)
- Once he was stoned, but did not die (vs. 25)
- Three times he was shipwrecked & adrift at sea (vs. 25)
- He was in danger from rivers, robbers, and many more (vs. 26)
- There were many sleepless nights (vs. 27)
- He was often without food, in cold and exposure (vs. 27)
- And there was daily pressure of anxiety for the churches (vs. 28)
- “Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?” (vs.)