

December 10, 2006 AM

**THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE PROMISED SEED**

**GENESIS 22.1-19**

Focus of the text: *the testing of Abraham's faith in the giving up of his only son so that the promise of God concerning life for the world might come to be realized in and through his seed.*

**1. THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM: "GOD WILL PROVIDE" (1-8)**

***Putting Abraham to the test (1-2):***

"after these things": links expulsion of Ishmael and covenant-cutting with Abimelech.

Abraham has been living in the land of Beersheba for many years now. Isaac is probably a teenager by now.

God comes to *test* Abraham. Why is God testing Abraham? Does God not know what is in Abraham's heart? Does God not know that Abraham truly fears Him? Well, yes. God knows everything about Abraham. He knows his thoughts. He knows his heart. He even knows what Abraham will do when he is put to the test.

Why does He put Abraham to the test? To remain in the fear of God (Ex 20.20), reveal his heart (Dt. 8.2), and be humbled so that God may do him good in the end (Dt 8.16).

God's intention for our testing is always that we might mature, learning greater trust in Him, confirming us in our faith, protecting us from sin, and encouraging us to greater obedience.

It is not in spite of the test/trial that God's promise is fulfilled, but it is right through the middle of it. The trial itself provides the means for the accomplishment of God's purposes of redemption.

The call is somewhat parallel to the call in ch. 12. Now is another call to exercise his faith.

"your son, your only, the one whom you love, Isaac" - Ishmael is out of the house. Isaac is the promised seed.

"One of the mountains of Moriah" - Mt. Moriah becomes the Temple mount (2 Chr 3.1). The death and resurrection of the promised seed becomes the foundation and cornerstone to the Temple of God.

The sacrifice of Isaac is also archetypal of true worship: human sacrifice. We are to present ourselves to God as living sacrifices.

***Initial faith (3):*** Abraham made preparations and went to the place God told him.

***Certainty of resurrection (4-5):*** "Third day" - 3<sup>rd</sup> day of creation new life comes from the water (i.e., land) and from the land new life (i.e., vegetation). Cf. Jonah, Hosea concerning Israel, the Lord Jesus.

"*we will come back to you*" - he is thinking of the resurrection; cf. Heb 11.17-19

How and why would Abraham be thinking this? Abraham believed the promise of the seed in Gen 3.15. It would seem reasonable to conclude that this was the time that God would defeat Satan and save the world through the sacrifice and resurrection of his son.

***Unified to the death (6):*** "wood" is the word for "tree." We first meet this wood in the Garden of Eden where trees are prominent in the midst of the Garden.

Trees are places of life and death. In short they are the place of God's judgment, where God kills and makes alive. This wood, this tree, upon which Isaac would be sacrificed would be the place of judgment; it would be the place for death and also a source of life.

"walked together" - The Father and the Son walk together up to the time of death. They cannot be separated except by the curse and the death that will come because of it on the wood.

***God will see to the lamb (7-8):*** "God will see/provide for Himself, the lamb for the ascension offering my son."

"My son" - at the conclusion of the sentence, not at the beginning. The Hebrew, in my estimation, leaves open the possibility that Abraham is giving him the answer: the lamb is Isaac. God has miraculously provided the lamb.

## 2. THE PROVISION OF GOD: A RAM INSTEAD OF HIS SON (9-14)

**The “death” of Isaac (9-10):** altar = miniature holy mountain. An altar is the place where heaven and earth meet; where God meets with man in judgment and salvation.

Binding the sacrifice is not prescribed in the law (but see Ps 118.27). Isaac is rendered a completely helpless and submissive sacrifice. He is called a *na'ar* in Hebrew, which indicates someone who is at least in his teens and could be upwards of 25.

**Passing the test (11-12):** Angel of YHWH shows up earlier with Hagar (ch. 16) and Hagar and Ishmael (ch. 21).

Angel of YHWH = God Himself; cp. vv. 1-2 and v. 11 (“from Me”)

Why is it important that Abraham *fears* God? Why did He not say, “I know that you *love* me”? or “I know that you are devoted to me” or “I know that you believe me”? Well there is some relationship to all of these things in Abraham’s fear of God.

Fear can be understood as reverence or awe but it does not exclude trepidation. It is the fear of YHWH that is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. That which you fear controls your actions.

True faith fears God because true faith is conformed to God’s word. That is, God’s word controls the thinking and actions of the one who believes.

**God sees to the sacrifice (13-14):** God reveals that the time of the fulfillment of the defeat of Satan and his seed has not come. There would be another seed of Abraham. This other seed would save even Isaac like the ram caught in the thicket.

“ram” = “the chief of the flock.”

“thicket” = thorns and thistles (cp. Isa 9.18). Thorns are associated with the curse from Gen 3.

“YHWH *yir’eh*,” literally, YHWH will see. God sees and the consequence of this (and wrapped up in the word) is the fact that he provides (an English word that is derived from Latin meaning “to see beforehand”).

“On the Mountain of YHWH He will see” - the place where God provides life for His people. It is the place where He provides the substitute for their sins and life for the world. There YHWH sees and remembers His people.

## 3. THE PROMISE OF GOD: “I WILL BLESS YOU” (15-19)

**A sure oath (15-16a):** The sacrifice of the promised seed becomes life for the world.

Makes the oath sure by a double witness (cp. Heb 6.13ff.)

**The reward of obedience (16b-18):** Though his obedient faith Abraham will inherit the promises. The promises can only be laid hold of by faith-filled obedience (not that there is any other kind). E.g., the Promised Land must be conquered.

The stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore promise given here harks back promises given in chs. 13 and 15. As we studied, there are multiple references packed into these phrases. New heavens, new earth.

Like stars Abraham’s seed will “rule.” Noted here as well explicitly.

Blessing = life.

Great Abraham’s greater Son, Jesus Christ will become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And because of that obedience, God the Father exalts Him to be the Lord of the world having authority over all things in heaven and on earth (cf. Phil 2.6-11; Mt 28.18; cf. also Rom 5).

**Living among the nations (19):** continues to live among the nations

(1) Are you willing to sacrifice the things you love dearly for the sake of the greater purposes of God knowing that God will restore/resurrect them somehow in the end? (2) Are you a living sacrifice? (3) Tests only reveal what is already there and serve to mature us.