

Genesis 22:1 – 18



~ In our last two very ugly reports from our Spiritual Safari, we have seen some true wonders in the Word of God. There are strange similarities in the lives of Isaac and Christ. Taking that a step further, we are now going to see the absolute depths of beauty in the Word of God as we look at the sacrificial similarities in the lives of Christ and Isaac. The atheist will tell you this section of Scripture is just one huge contradiction; because if a contradiction could be found, of course, then the Law of the Lord is out the window. With God out of their way they could do whatever they want to with the literature of the Bible and their sin be justified in their minds, by saying, “.... tomorrow we die.” The liberal purports over a thousand contradictions in the Bible, and there are several books about them. The alleged “contradiction” we will look at in this report is that of “Faith” and “Works” – and this is also a favorite argument amongst a particular set of so-called “Christians” today.

James asked, “....was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” – James chapter two verse twenty-one. Paul said, “....what shall we say then that Abraham our father hath found, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” – Romans chapter four verses one through three. James speaks of works of faith, not the works of the law. As Christians we are not under the Law of Moses. We are called to a MUCH higher plane of living than that, and that level of living requires good works, because salvation produces good works. Paul is talking about justification before God. If you have trusted the Lord you will have some good works in your life, or something is radically wrong in your relationship to Christ. Paul quotes from way back at the fifteenth chapter of Genesis from a time in Abraham’s life when he was just starting out in his walk of faith. Only God knew Abraham’s heart at this time. Abraham failed many times; we just don’t see them all.

Now, when Abraham took up for child sacrifice even the hardest Philistine neighbor had to say to themselves, “....Abraham lives by works.” James said Abraham was justified by works. When? When he offered Isaac. My question is: did Abraham really offer Isaac? The answer, of course, is no; but Abraham was sure willing to. The act of willing to is what James is talking about. It reveals Abraham had the works of faith. James emphasizes the works of faith found here in the twenty-second chapter and Paul emphasizes faith, whereby we believe

God, which was established, as we said, chapters ago. The Word of God is in perfect harmony....

1 And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

~ The word "tempt" should read "test" in verse one; because James also made it clear that God never tempts anyone. God does test our faith and that's what's happening here as the Lord tests Abraham; but God isn't tempting Abraham – because offering Isaac as a sacrifice wasn't a temptation. God's request sure sounds strange to me; and I'm sure it sounded strange to Abraham. Moriah, in verse two, is on the same ridge as Golgotha - where Christ was crucified; and many feel that Jesus died on the same Mount that Abraham offered Isaac on. It took Abraham three days to find the place God had sent him to. The transaction that is going to take place is between the Father and the Son. Mankind is completely shut out at the Cross. The darkness that came at the third hour was the night in which no man could work. During the last three hours the Cross became an altar on which the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world was slain! Man cannot participate in that Transaction, my beloved. The burnt offering speaks of Christ – and Christ alone - and Who He is! This is a picture of human sacrifice; and I can already hear someone asking, "...isn't this wrong?" The answer is: yes, it's absolutely as morally wrong as it could possibly be....

2 And he said , Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest , and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

~ Alright, let's think about this. Here comes Abraham with Isaac so let's ask him some questions. "Where you going, Abraham?" I think Abraham would answer, "To offer Isaac as a sacrifice." ~ "Well, Abraham, don't you think that's wrong?" Abraham would say, "Yes, yes, I do." "Okay Abraham, then why are you doing this?" ~ Abraham would say, "...I don't understand it but after twenty-five years of walking with the Lord my God has never failed me and He's never asked me to do anything that didn't prove to be the best thing for me. If I have to go through with this, I will, because God will raise Him from the dead." How do you think the

community viewed Abraham at this point in his life, friends? Well, it gets worse, because Sarah is one hundred twenty-seven years old in our safari timeline – which means Isaac wasn't some little "lad" – Isaac was about thirty years old at the time of this sickening sacrificial scene. I think Isaac could have easily overcome Abraham in a physical encounter; but Isaac was acting in obedience unto death just as Christ went to the cross in obedience saying, "...not My will but Thine be done." Christ's death on the cross fulfills the will of God, friends; and it means the Lord Jesus has taken His Righteous position in the Trinity as the Son....

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

~ Christ carried His Own Cross as Isaac carried the wood. The fire speaks of judgment. The knife speaks of the execution of said judgment in sacrifice. God said He would provide a "lamb" - but a "ram" is what was provided as a substitute. This has been the same substitutionary sacrifice that began in the Garden of Eden – and it will be all the way down to the cross of Christ in our Spiritual Safari. The Lord didn't provide the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world until much later in Bible history. The lamb was the animal that pointed to

the coming of the Lord Jesus. John the Baptist identified Christ and said, "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." God provided Himself a burnt offering which speaks of Christ....

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

~ Jehovahjireh = the place where God intervenes. I'll be very honest with you – because I always am honest with you dear readers - I just have to laugh when I think about the life shattering crises, strain upon his heart and the physical stress test of his soul Abraham has already gone through. That may sound cold – but what else should I do? He was told to leave the family behind right from the start – just up and leave them all behind. That was God's commandment to Abraham. That was a very real test, too, of course; and he failed that test. So, God eventually split them all up His own way. That way wasn't very nice. We can do things His way or He will do them His way without us, friends. That's what's real – and that's never good for us. Then, we had Lot, whom Abraham loved, rescued and carried around for a while until God had to separate them permanently - and Lot decided to go down into Sodom.

Then, Abraham made a horrible choice with Hagar and had to deal with the consequences of that action. Remember, we saw Abraham cry out to God, "...oh, God, that Ishmael might live before You!" Abraham loved Ishmael and deeply regretted being separated from him. Now, he has been through a fourth test – a Supreme Test – the most difficult of his life - to give up Isaac. Abraham doesn't exactly understand the details and implications of all of this. God had said, "...in Isaac shall your seed be called." Well, that doesn't match up with a child sacrifice of Isaac. So, our only logical conclusion is that Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead if he had gone through with Gods instructions. Abraham was willing to go all the way with God. James said, "...by works Isaac offered his son." But Abraham took the knife, raised it, and plunged the knife through the fifth rib? – No! The Angel of the Lord – the Lord Jesus Christ Himself – called Abraham out from Heaven and said, "Abraham" and

Abraham said, "...here am I." Jesus says, "lay not thy hand upon the lad, for now I know your heart..." – how does God know Abraham's heart? - By Abraham's actions; and by Abraham's works - which were all the result of Abraham's faith.

Faith is how we come to Christ, and He already knows if we are genuine or not. But the man down the road from you, and probably some of those living and working with you, doesn't know. What about the people at your church? What about the people at your office? What about your friends? What about the waiter that handles your food? – Do ANY of them know you really love the Lord Jesus? Is Jesus your Savior today or your Lord and King? Friends, don't kid yourselves, others only know you by your works; all of which is another reason for testing in our lives, by the way.

Now, very personally, may I say that any person God calls – any person that God saves and – FOR SURE – any person that God intends to use - will be heavily tested. Testing in THIS capacity is to strengthen and establish us – in His Word! It's the only way He makes us serviceable to Himself. This is so important that we note this and really, really get a hold of these truths. So many people want to reject this proper Biblical teaching. Be honest with yourself – for a change! Be careful what you allow your mind to weigh! Abraham was given the ultimate tests in life. There will be no need for God to test Abraham again after this.

We can also be assured that God never permits or accepts human sacrifice. That's going to be ALL important when we get to the Book of Judges and Jephthah and his foolish, awful vow he made to the Lord concerning his daughter. When Christ came into the world God, His Father, offered Him as a Sacrifice. He spared not His only Son but delivered Him up freely for you and for me, and for our sins, and for our iniquities. The cross is the altar where the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world is offered. Abraham was justified before God by his faith; but Abraham is justified before men by his works. Abraham demonstrated to both that he had genuine faith....

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

~ As we conclude this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God I might suggest you look at verse eighteen again. The nations – all the nations – have been blessed by the Gospel of Christ going out. I doubt there are any people left in the world that have not heard that Christ died for their sins and was raised again for our justification. Even in the deepest forest of New Guinea. Even the rankest atheists around this forum on which I teach know all about Abraham and Jesus and Mary and every other Biblical story. They also seem to know the Bible just a little better than most so-called "Christians" do – which is heart breaking to me. Nevertheless, the Blessing of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and how he died on the cross, was buried and then raised from

the dead on the third day according to Scripture has gone out now to all the nations. Every one of them. Bow thy head - and obey His voice; faith without works is dead, my beloved ~

