

Genesis 22:1-14 ¹ Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." ⁶ So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. ⁷ But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. ⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." ¹² And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

¹³ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

John 3:16 ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Text: Genesis 22:1-14; John 3:16 A 3/11/18 Passion History, part 4 Psalm 86 Resp. Ps.: 66
Hymns: 23, 363, 723, 244

GOD'S LOVING SACRIFICE FOR US

Fellow redeemed through the sacrifice of God's Son,

Abraham was a faithful believer who lived during the time of the Old Testament. God had promised Abraham that he would have a son, and that his son's descendants would be the Messiah. Finally when Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were old, God miraculously allowed them to have a son: Isaac. Not many years later God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son. Put yourself in Abraham's place. Certainly this raised serious questions and conflicts within Abraham. If Isaac died before he had any children, how could the Messiah be his descendant? As a parent it was absolutely crushing for Abraham to think of having to kill his one and only son, as God had said, the "son ... whom you love."

We're told, "God tested Abraham." Did Abraham love God enough to be willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac? God showed how much He loves us by His willingness to sacrifice His own dear Son. How hard must it have been for God, who is love (1 Jn. 4:8) and loves His Son with a perfect love, to have to send Jesus to suffer and die and do nothing to stop it?

Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son for the Lord's sake. But we sinful human beings don't deserve the sacrifice of the Son of God. Yet God can and does love us sinners so much that He offered up Jesus for our salvation. The Bible says, *"In this the love of God was shown toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ... [God] loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins"* (Ro. 5:8).

Martin Luther writes in one of his hymns:

God beheld my wretched state before the world's foundation,
And, mindful of His mercies great, He planned my soul's salvation.
A father's heart He turned to me, sought my redemption fervently:
He gave His dearest Treasure.

He spoke to His beloved Son: "'Tis time to have compassion.
Then go, bright Jewel of My crown, and bring to man salvation.
From sin and sorrow set him free. Slay bitter death for him that he
May live with Thee forever." (TLH #387:4-5)

We're told, *"Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey."* Abraham didn't hesitate to set out with Isaac. We read in the fourth chapter of Galatians, *"When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son"* (v. 4). When the time finally arrived for Jesus to come to save us, God did not hesitate to send Him.

"Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son." Isaac carried the wood upon which he was to be sacrificed. John tells us in his Gospel, *"They took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place ... where they crucified Him"* (19:16b-18a). Jesus was at first made to carry the wooden cross upon which He was sacrificed.

Because he loved God most of all, Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac. Because Isaac loved God most of all, he was willing to submit to his father and allow himself to be sacrificed. Isaac helped to set up the altar. When it became clear to Isaac that he himself was to be the sacrifice, no mention is made of him resisting in any way. Abraham was an old man. Had Isaac wanted to prevent the sacrifice, he certainly could have. But he did not.

Because our heavenly Father loves you and me and everyone so much, He was willing to sacrifice Jesus. Because Jesus loves us all so much, He was willing to sacrifice Himself. Jesus said, *"I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again"* (Jn. 10:17b-18). Scripture says, *"Christ Jesus ... humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"* (Philip. 2:8).

Jesus could have easily prevented His suffering and death. When He knew that the time had come for Him to suffer and die the Bible says that Jesus *"steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem"* (Lk.9:51). When the mob led by Judas came to take Jesus away, Jesus stood there and let them take Him. Throughout Jesus' 'trials' when obvious lies were told about Him and He was ridiculed and blasphemed against, humiliated, and beaten, not once did Jesus try to resist or

to defend Himself. As Jesus was dying on the cross, many ridiculed Him: *“He saved others, ... but He cannot save Himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe”* (Mk. 15:31-32). Jesus could have come down from the cross and ended His suffering. But He remained on the cross to the bitter end for us.

Jesus knew what lay ahead of Him: feeling all the guilty feelings of every person who will ever live, being forsaken by His Father because of our sins which Jesus would bear, and facing the righteous anger and punishment of God over every sin committed throughout the history of our human race. *“Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows”* (Is. 53:4). Jesus knew that this was the only way that we could be saved. So like Isaac, Jesus submitted to His Father and was willing to die. Scripture says about Jesus: *“For the joy set before Him”* (the joy of our salvation which Jesus knew He would accomplish by His death), *“He endured the cross, scorning its shame”* (He. 12:2b).

Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, God stopped him. Abraham had passed the test of his love for God. God never actually intended for Abraham to kill Isaac. God knew that in his heart Abraham would have obeyed Him and sacrificed his only dear son. Hebrews 11:17 says, *“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac;”* not *“would have offered,”* but, in God’s eyes, *“offered up Isaac.”*

Hebrews 11 goes on to say, *“[Abraham] considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead, from whom he also received [Isaac] back as a type.”* Abraham had told his servants, *“I and the boy”* (Isaac) *“[will] go over there ... and”* *“then we”* (Abraham and Isaac) *“will come back to you.”* Abraham believed that when he sacrificed Isaac God would bring him back to life again. The Bible says this is a type, or picture, of Jesus. Unlike Isaac, Jesus really was sacrificed. And Jesus raised Himself bodily from the dead!

God provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice for Isaac. God provided Jesus as our Substitute. *“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed”* (Is.53:5).

Abraham took Isaac to Mount Moriah to sacrifice him. Mount Moriah was later renamed Mount Zion. This is the same mountain upon which, many, many years later, in Jerusalem, the temple was built and the sacrifices were offered to God. Those sacrifices were all a type, or picture of Christ, *“the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”* (Jn. 1:29).

Is there a harsher test, to tell someone to kill his own child?! God willingly sacrificed His only-begotten Son to save us. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* (Jn. 3:16). By faith in Jesus who died for our sins on the cross, our sins are all forgiven, and we’re saved, and we’re going to heaven! Amen.