

Jesus BC: Mountain Sacrifice

There is a thought among Christians that if only we were able to be with Jesus, if only we had the privilege to have Him physically here, standing right in front of us, we could know Him more....we could have a greater level of intimacy with our Savior.

What if I told you that is not true? On the road to Emmaus, in Luke 24, those two men, they encountered Jesus as they walked, talking about Him and the events of His death and resurrection, they didn't know that this Man was Jesus as He had prevented them from recognizing Him.

Luke 24:27 (HCSB)

Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Jesus shared with them what the scriptures (the OT) said about Him and these events that took place. In v32 the men said:

"Weren't our hearts ablaze within us while He was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?"

Jesus did end up revealing Himself to them. But it wasn't His physical presence that touched their hearts and stoked the intimacy, it was the opening of the scriptures.

Alistar Begg said: *"It's through the scriptures that you can know Jesus and have intimacy with Him that will be even greater than if He were actually standing right before you"*

In this Jesus BC series, that is what we seek, to know Jesus on a greater level. To see Him in all of the scriptures and as we do this, our hearts come ablaze for Him.

Genesis 22:1-19 (HCSB)

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!"
"Here I am," he answered.

2 "Take your son," He said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the

place in the distance. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we'll come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the sacrificial knife, and the two of them walked on together.

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, "My father."

And he replied, "Here I am, my son."

Isaac said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

8 Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Then the two of them walked on together.

9 When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" He replied, "Here I am."

12 Then He said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from Me." 13 Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14 And Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide, so today it is said: "It will be provided on the Lord's mountain."

15 Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By Myself I have sworn," this is the Lord's declaration: "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the gates of their enemies. 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed My command."

19 Abraham went back to his young men, and they got up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham settled in Beer-sheba.

This story is one where we read it and ultimately feel relieved that God didn't ask us to do this. Honestly, it may even make us question why in the world God would ask Abraham to do this. "Yeah it all worked out but talk about some emotional trauma for both Abraham and Isaac!"

As we look at some of the key points of this mountain sacrifice we again like with Daniel last week, will see great faith and obedience but above all, we will see Jesus all over the story.

Here's a few key points from the mountain sacrifice:

1. Isaac was a long-promised son, unlike any other who had finally been miraculously born at a time after a long time where most people would have already given up waiting. Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 when he was born. Abraham was told at age 75 that God would bless his offspring.
2. Abraham went out and split the wood. He prepared the wood that his son Isaac would be sacrificed on.
3. There were three days between the time of God telling Abraham to sacrifice his son and the sacrifice on the mountain
4. Abraham had a knowing or great faith right from the start that both he and Isaac would return from the top of the mountain.
5. Isaac carried the very wood that he was to be sacrificed on.
6. Abraham said that God Himself would provide the sacrifice.
7. Abraham is the one taking all steps leading up to the act of sacrifice and by his actions we see Isaac is in full submission to his father
8. A ram (strong male sheep) is provided by God in place of the human life that would have been required.
9. The ram is caught by its horns in a thicket with thorns around it's head.

We tell this to kids? No wonder most kids like their mom more....they are scared of dad! I'm glad I don't have a fireplace....I doubt my kids would carry the wood. I'm surprised they would go anywhere with me!

I say that all in fun, I'm certainly not suggesting we stop telling these biblical events to our children. Instead, I would suggest the parents need to know the real meaning behind these stories to explain it to their kids....because on the surface both God and Abraham can look a little suspect.

When in fact God is always good and just and Abraham has unparalleled trust and faith in God!

I'm sure some of you have already begun to connect some dots and see Jesus in the mountain sacrifice. Let's dig in and see:

1. Jesus' story is about a long -promised Messiah, awaited and hoped for, finally arriving by a miraculous birth.

Genesis 3:15 (HCSB)

I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

People had waited for about 4000 years for Jesus to come. That makes the 25 years that Abraham waited not seem so long.

Matthew 1:23 (HCSB)

See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him Immanuel, which is translated "God is with us."

Isaac was a miracle birth as God opened Sarah's womb that had been shut, it was medically impossible for her to birth a child without God's intervention. Jesus' birth was even MORE miraculous, the Holy Spirit conceived a baby totally by the miraculous hands of God within a virgin girl. WOW!

2. God prepared the means by which His Son would die before it happened.

Abraham got the wood ready preparing the means by which Isaac would die, showing us what God had actually already done but no one knew....

Acts 2:23 (HCSB)

Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him.

3. Jesus' body was in the tomb for three days before His resurrection.

Mark 8:31 (HCSB)

Then He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, be killed, and rise after three days.

Isaac had three days from when Abraham knew of the sacrifice he would have to make and after 3 days, Isaac was figuratively resurrected, he was all but dead, now he lives. This showed us what would actually happen with our Lord for real. He would die but after 3 days He lives!

4. God knew that Jesus' story wouldn't end in the tomb, His plan from the very beginning was for Jesus to return to Him.

Isaiah 25:8 (HCSB)

He will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face and remove His people's disgrace from the whole earth, for the Lord has spoken.

5. Jesus carried the very wood that He was to be sacrificed on.

John 19:17 (HCSB)

Carrying His own cross, He went out to what is called Skull Place, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

6. Jesus was provided by God to be sacrificed for the life of all of Abraham's' descendants according to God's will

Galatians 3:7 (HCSB)

then understand that those who have faith are Abraham's sons.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (HCSB)

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

God provides the sacrifice!

7. Jesus lived His entire life in complete submission to God's plan for Him

Luke 22:42 (HCSB)

"Father, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me—nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done."

THIS is obedience! When you think back to Isaac and his obedience, it wasn't just that Isaac had this radical trust in his father Abraham, It was that Isaac, himself had this radical trust in his father's God. Sure he trusted that Abraham was listening to God but it took a lot of trust and faith even in Isaac's part.

Jesus also had this radical trust in His Father. He submitted His entire life to His Father's plan. He always did the Father's will, no matter how much logical sense it did or didn't make.

8. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is provided by God in place of the human life that would have been required.

John 1:29 (HCSB)

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

It's pretty amazing that God provided that ram for Abraham so that it could be the substitutionary sacrifice so that Isaac's human life did not have to be given up. We read that and it's a straight up miracle....an amazing one at that.

But Jesus, the Lamb of God was provided to be a substitutionary sacrifice so that YOUR life does not have to be given up as the penalty for your sin....how much greater is that?

9. Jesus wears a crown of thorns upon His head.

Matthew 27:29 (HCSB)

They twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and placed a reed in His right hand. And they knelt down before Him and mocked Him: "Hail, King of the Jews!"

That ram caught in the thicket had thorns all around it's head, symbolizing that Jesus too would wear a crown of thorns around His head.

The thorns are significant because it reminds us that Jesus is in fact a King, but a King who would suffer for you and wear the sin of the world.

If you remember back when Adam first sinned, a part of the curse of sin was the cursing of the ground and that it would bring forth thorns and thistles. Jesus wore a symbol of the curse that He would soon destroy!

The mountain sacrifice is more than a story about faith, it's about Jesus. All scriptures point to Jesus.

There's another incredible thing found back in verse 2:

Genesis 22:2 (HCSB)

"Take your son," He said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

This is the very first time that the Hebrew word for love was used in the bible. It wasn't used at creation, nor with Adam and Eve, nor with Cain and Abel, nor with Noah and the flood, not even in God's promise after the flood, and it wasn't used in the 10 chapters about Abraham even where God promised to bless him and to give him Isaac.

The first time the word love shows up is when God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son whom he loves. At the beginning of an event that shows us that one day Jesus would be sacrificed for our sins. The One whom God loves, given for His people....the people that He loves so much that He would give His Son.

John 3:16 (HCSB)

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

What a God! The Father loved us so much that He sent Jesus, and Jesus loved us so much that He came and He was obedient even to death on a rugged cross.

In the mountain sacrifice we tend to hone in on Abraham’s faith as the main lesson of the story but today I want to focus on a different point.....obedience.

Abraham is over 100 years old, we don’t know how old exactly but Isaac carried his own wood up a mountain, he wasn’t 7, likely an early teen. For the sake of the illustration let’s say 15 making Abraham 115. How many 15 year old kids could outrun or physically overpower a 115 year old man.....probably all of them!

At some point here once up the mountain, Isaac has to figure this out and somehow a man 100 years older than him, got him on the altar tied up on a pile of wood with a knife in the air, and never ran, never fought, from what we can tell never even argued about it!

Isaac was obedient even to the point of being willing to be sacrificed! His trust in his father was amazing! He totally submits in trust to Abraham, just as Jesus totally submits in trust to the Father.

*****WORSHIP**

Jesus was obedient even to the point of being willing to be sacrificed. He had the power to resist, to change course, to overpower those who accused Him and abused Him. But instead He willingly follows the Father’s plan modeling for us true submission to God.

The question for you today is this “How is your obedience to God?”

Do you live your life so submitted in trust to God that you would do anything He asks of you? Are you willing to sacrifice YOUR life, all that you want, all that you desire, to instead trust in His plan for your life?

See Jesus is not going to force you to choose Him. He won’t force you to follow Him. He wants YOU out of your love for Him, to trust Him, and be obedient to His ways.

He want’s you to give up your life, sacrifice all that you are, die to yourself, so He can resurrect it in line with His plan. New life in Christ. It’s yours today if you will lay down your old one on the pile of wood at God’s altar.

Will you come today?