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## Worship From Abraham and Isaac

### Readings:

Genesis 22:1-12

### Introduction

There are few biblical passages which demonstrate worship more perfectly than that of Abraham offering up Isaac (Gen. 22:1-14). This ancient story carried stupendous truths and shadows of the work of Divine Persons with a major focus on God and Christ at Calvary. The following are some thoughts on worship from that ancient incident.

There is often mentioned the things that are spoken about for the first time in Genesis twenty-two. It is usually listed as: "In Genesis there is the first mention of "love" (ch. 22:2); father and son going "together" (ch. 22:8); of "worship" (ch. 22:5); and being "bound" (ch. 22:9). However, there is also intimated for the first time the sacrifice would be a human being, as seen by Isaac being presented as a burnt offering, and specifically mentioned for the first time is the character of the sacrifice God would provide.

As the story of Abraham and Isaac develops we will observe some of the pre-requirements of worship and some observations on what worship is.

### Before The Journey Commenced

Isaac was the appointed sacrifice by God before he ever left the Father's house, and Abraham did not choose the place, God determined it.

- a) Everything about the sacrifice of Christ was from God.
  - i) The sacrifice of our Lord began in eternity past when:
    - (1) God promised eternal life before the world began (Titus 1:2), through the sacrifice of His Son.
  - ii) It was in the fulness of time that Christ came into the world. (Gal. 4:4)
  - iii) Christ was delivered according to the plan of God. (Acts 2:23; 4:28; 1 Pet. 1:2)
  - iv) God determined how He should die. It was a vicarious death (Isa. 53:5); it was according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3-4).
  - v) God chose when He should die. (Ex. 12; Lev. 23)
  - vi) God determined His resurrection. (Psa. 16:10)

### **Thoughts on worship from this truth. We observe that:**

Worship originates with God.

Worship necessitates the individual leaving the natural to be alone with God.

### Abraham and Isaac Together

It is interesting to observe that there is no record of the father and son going together until AFTER the separation from the others that emphasis is made on the togetherness of the father and son. "I and the lad will go yonder" (v. 5); "They went both of them together" (vv. 6, 8). The thought of "togetherness" is found again in verse 19 when Abraham returns to the young men and they go together to Beersheba. In verses 5-8 it is father and son, indicative of the profound truth that the Lord must also leave humanity and places behind, whither they are the Temple, Bethany, the populous or the disciples, and begin in a very real way a pathway that only He and the Father could walk together. No angel nor human can comprehend the deep agony, bitter tears, and dread which He experienced in Gethsemane. The path of unswerving devotion to God meant moving onward to Calvary. I remember a hymn we used to sing, "And from that track, He turned not back"; with ram like determination He walked alone with the Father. This was worship in its purest level for the deepest level of worship is praising God in spite of the pain.

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- a) For them to go together showed they were in fellowship, for how can two walk together unless they be agreed"? (Amos 3:3)
  - i) Every step the Lord took throughout life was in fellowship with the Father.
    - (1) When he went to the Temple and looked around but did nothing or came and cleansed it. (Mk. 11:11; Jn. 2:16)
    - (2) When He healed, that is did marvellous works. (Jn. 10:25, 32, 37, 38)
  - ii) Every direction, whither to go, stay or follow, that He gave to others, He was in fellowship with God, and as they obeyed they also were moving in fellowship with God.
    - (1) When He sent the man to wash in the pool of Siloam. (Jn. 9:7)
    - (2) When He sent the disciples to preach and heal. (Lk. 9:2)
  - iii) Every word He spoke and as others spoke in obedience to Him was in fellowship with the Father.

Both go to worship (v.5). Abraham was not the only one who worshipped. Isaac also was worshipping. It must never be forgotten that Calvary is the greatest manifestation of worship the world has ever known.

The heart of the father and the purposes of God:

- a) The love of the father for the son, and preciousness of the son to the father is reiterated several times:
  - i) "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac" (v.2)
  - ii) "Whom thou lovest" (v.2)
  - iii) "Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only from me" (v.12)
  - iv) "Not withheld thy son, thine only son" (v.16)
- b) That which we have symbolized is the uniqueness and love of God the Father for His beloved Son:
  - i) At His baptism
    - (1) "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17)
  - ii) At His transfiguration
    - (1) "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5)
  - iii) In parable
    - (1) "Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him" (Lk. 20:13)
  - iv) In His delightfulness in Christ
    - (1) "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13 ASV)
    - (2) "Who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13 Darby)
- c) This was a work (on the human level) only between the father and the son, Abraham and Isaac, but in the higher level it foreshadowed a work only between God the Father and His Son.
  - i) "The Lord hath laid on Him" (Isa. 53:6)
  - ii) "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4)
  - iii) "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19)
- d) It must be appreciated that on the cross Christ was forsaken by God, not the Father! (Psa. 22:1; Matt. 27:46). In the former it always has to do with Christ the man (Psa. 22:10), but the latter it is relationship that is emphasized. Thus, we never read of Abraham leaving Isaac.

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### **Thoughts on worship from this truth. We observe that:**

The individual moving and living in harmony with God's revealed will.  
The individual or company moving in fellowship with each other, not just outwardly but in heart.

### **Abraham**

In Genesis 22 Abraham is seen not only as the Father to Isaac, but on a higher level as a prototype of God the Father, and Isaac as a prototype of the Lord Jesus. Against this background there is in type the Father who gives his son as an offering (v.2), and the son was to be a burnt offering.

In the scriptures there are several fathers who sent their sons, but Abraham did not just send his son, he was ready to give his son in an act of devotion to God. As a father of only one son, I try to put myself in any of the places of these fathers. Joseph sent his son but had no idea that which lay ahead of him. Had the father known the shame and grief His beloved son would go through, would he have sent him? Or Jesse, he sent his son, his youngest son, and he went down into the valley of death to meet the giant. Had Jesse known that which would befall his son, would he have sent him? I doubt it. Glorious is the truth that God not only knew that which His Son would go through, the shame, the sufferings, the mockery, and yet in love sent Him into the valley of death and then further. Christ went into death, tasting death for every man. Such a gift is the expression of infinite love.

Abraham went further than either of these men. He knew what lay ahead for his son, it was the altar on Moriah. Of course Abraham knew God would raise him, but the son was going to suffer and his body consumed on the altar, that would be agonizing beyond words.

### **En Route To Moriah**

It is then seen that the fire and the knife were always in the hands of the father. (v.6)

- a) The Lord will provide Himself a lamb. Several thoughts are here incorporated.
  - i) The sacrificial Lamb was for the Lord. This is a matter we often forget. The sacrifice of the Lord was for the execution of the justice of God.
  - ii) The Lord Himself provided the Lamb.
    - (1) In the ASV, DBY, NKJV, and YLT, they all translate the phrase as: "Himself shall provide the" not "a" lamb. While many change the expression to mean, The Lord would provide Himself to be that lamb, I find no grammatical evidence for such a construction, neither can I find any grounds in any commentary for it. Young's literal makes the meaning quite clear (Gen. 22:8 YLT) and Abraham saith, God doth provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son; and they go on both of them together.

### **Thoughts on worship from this truth. We observe that:**

There must be in the individuals life a spiritual moving onward toward the altar.  
Worship can be enriched by a greater appreciation of the roles of God and Christ.  
*(I have heard well meaning brethren thanking the Father for dying for them.*

*It was not the Father who suffered for sins but the Son).*

### **Isaac**

Precious is the truth that while the Lord called to Adam saying: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him" (v.12), Isaac was spared. However, when the Lord was about to enter the affliction for sins, no voice came from Heaven. A substitute was provided for Isaac but Christ was the substitute for us. Isaac was spared but concerning the Lord, we read not only that: "He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16), or "He sent

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the Son” (1 Jn. 4:14), but amazingly the Holy Spirit has caused it to be penned: “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32).

- a) Faithfulness and unwavering belief in the promise of God enabled Abraham to be willing to offer up Isaac. In like manner, but now applied to Christ, it was His confidence in the faithfulness of God to His promise that assured Him of His triumphant resurrection and exaltation.
- b) When it comes to us, the question is asked, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”; and the answer resounds through the ages of time: “He that spared not His own Son”. The promise of God is not an empty pledge, but it is secured by the execution of the full justice of God, Christ was not spared.

The attitude of the son to the activity of the father:

- a) The sonship is emphasized:
  - (1) “Isaac his son” (v.6)
  - (2) “Here am I, my son” ( v.7)
  - (3) “My son, God will provide” (v.8)
  - (4) “His son” (vv. 6, 13)

#### **Lessons on worship from this truth:**

Worship the wonder of divine love that caused the Father not only to give His Son of His love, but afflict Him for our sins (this is a truth Isaac could not prefigure)

Worship can involve the unwavering devotion of the Lord to the Father.

While we are in this body, what riches await those, who by the Holy Spirit of God, are led to the blessings of worship.

*. . . Rowan Jennings*