

## Jesus – Abraham's Lamb

### Genesis 22:1-14

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Faith is not supposed to waver, right? If you have true faith, you will never doubt. Isn't that true? Faith in God means never having to worry, always having all that our heart desires, God doing what we want – when we want it to be done! Really? If that is true, then I wonder if there is anybody **EVER**; who has, who had, or ever will have – true faith.

Seriously, you have all had moments of wavering faith, doubts. You may even, at some point in time, have given up all faith whatsoever. Today we consider Abraham. I know everybody thinks he's this stalwart pillar of faith, an example to us all. Really? Yes, he did leave his family and go where God told him to go, but did he ever doubt?

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would number as the stars. Yet on two different occasions, when Abraham and Sarah were traveling and before they had any children, he told Sarah to tell anybody who might ask, that she was his sister and not his wife. His faith faltered, he did not trust God to care for him! He feared that, maybe they would kill him to get her if they thought they were married. Seriously? At 80 years old, Sarah was so hot that Abraham did not trust God to protect him till He had the family he'd been promised?

They had been waiting... and waiting... and waiting for God to fulfill that promise for children. So, Sarah suggested that Abraham take her maidservant Hagar and lie with her to start the family. Again, Abraham's lack of faith in God's promise moves him commit adultery against God and against his wife, just as his wife suggested, and Ishmael is born, but apart from God's promise. Abraham did not trust God's promise, doing instead as his wife suggested and slept with another woman. And guess what, Sarah got upset.

Finally we come to our text for today. Abraham was 100 years old before God gave him his firstborn son, Isaac. Isaac is now old enough to carry the wood for a sacrifice, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son to Him.

In this instance, Abraham doesn't doubt, nor does he argue. He simply goes where God tells him to go. You do not disobey a direct command from God! So, in his mind, the deed is already done at that moment, Isaac was already dead.

They travel to the mountain for sacrifice, and upon arriving near the place, He tells the servants with him, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." We do not see it in the English, but it is clear in the Hebrew that he was saying that Isaac and he were going to go worship, and that *they* – both of them – would return to them.

Is this a lie? No! Instead, we glimpse Abraham's faith. Abraham trusted God's promise that his offspring would be a great nation. He wasn't sure how, but God would give him back his son Isaac, alive. Here is faith that trusts God even when God commands killing your son.

As they were on the way, Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

Was this a lie to his son? Abraham expected that he would sacrifice his son. But, believing and trusting God's promise, he expected God to perform a miracle so that he and Isaac would return. God Himself had provided this son to him, so even sacrificing him, Abraham was speaking what, by faith he believed God would do.

But there is more here. Abraham is prophesying about God providing a Lamb that would be sacrificed in order to bring life from the jaws of death. We see this lamb motif continued in Abraham's descendants, in the Passover sacrifice that God commanded the Israelites to make their last night in Egypt. Each family unit was to slaughter a lamb without blemish that had been brought into their homes for four days. The blood of the lamb was to be spread upon the doorposts and the lintels of their homes. The angel of death would see the blood, and pass over that home. After spreading the blood, they were to roast the lamb and eat its flesh.

Back to Abraham and our text. He built the altar, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac, laid him on the wood, and was about to sacrifice him when the Lord spoke, stopping him from making the sacrifice of His son. Lifting up his eyes in what we could only imagine as incredible relief, there was a ram caught in a nearby thicket which was then sacrificed. Was this the Lamb God provided so that Isaac might have life, as Abraham had promised?

Was this the Lamb to which Abraham referred earlier? No!

To understand this we must move forward about 2000 years from the time of our text. John the baptizer was in the wilderness, he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." (John 1:29-31)

John identifies the Lamb about which Abraham prophesied – Jesus! God's Christ is the One whom God had promised Abraham as the offspring by which the whole world would be blessed. Christ is the Lamb to be sacrificed, taking sin and death captive in His own body and putting them to death in His own flesh upon the cross.

What is the sacrifice necessary to pay for you sinfulness, to keep death from claiming you? Our Father looks at us and asks why we should not die eternally. All we need do is claim, "Jesus, Abraham's Lamb, is my Lamb."

Only two sacrifices carried the wood upon which they were laid. Only two sacrifices were bound at the point of sacrifice – Isaac and Jesus. Do you see the one pointing forward to the other? An only beloved son, sacrificed in obedience to God?

The Lamb doesn't doubt God, but says, "not my will but yours be done." He carries the wood upon which He would be sacrificed, and allows Himself to be crucified. On the cross, though He knows that His Father has laid on Him the sins of the world, and can no longer abide with Him but must forsake Him, He faithfully entrusts Himself to His Father, "Into Your hands I commit my spirit."

You and I sin against God, we violate the first commandment – we do not fear, love, and trust in God above all things. But, we do not pay for our lack of faith, we do not pay the price necessary for our sins? Instead, you confessed them earlier. And in doing so, you joined Abraham in proclaiming that you trusted in Christ. In confessing your sins, you were saying, "Jesus, Abraham's Lamb, is my Lamb!" You were right to have such faith, for the absolution was spoken, your sins were forgiven.

Your ears are open! You are hearing the Word of Christ's sacrifice proclaimed into your ears. Your sins are gone, for God provides for himself the Lamb!

You come to the Table of the Lord. You come on bended knee. You come with the blood of the Lamb marking the doorposts and the lintel of your heart. You come to have the angel of death – eternal death – pass over you, so that you might enter the promised land. You come to eat and to drink, for God provided Jesus, the Lamb!

It is in the hearing, the eating, and the drinking that your faith is strengthened, even as your sinful doubting has been forgiven.

Behold, Christ the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world – who takes away your sin. God has provided for Himself the Lamb – for you! And you are His redeemed children, for you have the faith of Abraham – you trust in Abraham's Lamb – Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who died and rose again that you might have life now and forevermore. Amen.