

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus: An Advent Journey through the Messianic Promises of Genesis
“God Will Provide for Himself the Lamb”
Small Group Follow-up Study for Genesis 22:1-19

RE-READ

[1] After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” [2] He said, “Take 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, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. [4] On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. [5] Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” [6] And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. [7] And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” [8] Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

[9] When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. [10] Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. [11] But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” [12] He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” [13] And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. [14] So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

[15] And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven [16] and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, [17] I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, [18] and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” [19] So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

RECAP

Three statements, in particular, stand out in this text that foreshadows our Lord’s glorious work on the cross:

“Take your son, your only son, whom you love ... and offer him as a burnt offering” (v. 2).

So Abraham is instructed, here, to take his beloved son or his only son whom he loves and offer him up as a burnt offering. As commentator Gordon Wenham notes, “A burnt offering involves cutting up and burning the whole animal on the altar and was the commonest type of sacrifice. It seems to have expressed at least two ideas: that the offerer is giving himself entirely to God (for the animal represents the offerer) and that the animal’s death atones for the worshiper’s sin.” This note of atonement is sounded loudly and clearly in

Leviticus 16:24 which reads: “And [Aaron] shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people.” By calling Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, God was calling a father to offer up his one and only son, his beloved son, as an atoning sacrifice for sin.

“God will provide for himself the lamb” (v. 8).

As Richard D. Phillips observes, Isaac’s question, “Where is the lamb?” is the same question that is asked by the whole of the Old Testament: “[I]n the Israelite priesthood, lamb after lamb was slain day after day at the temple. Yet all the while everyone knew that mere animals could not really take away sin. ‘Where is the lamb?’ the priests and people must often have asked. The answer was finally given by the last prophet of the old dispensation, John the Baptist, who saw Jesus walking along the Jordan and cried out, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’ (John 1:29).” John the Apostle echoes John the Baptist in Revelation 5:1-14.

“[Y]ou have not withheld your son, your only son” (vv. 12, 16).

In verse 16, Abraham’s willingness to give his son, his only son, is said to be the reason why God keeps his promises to Abraham alive: “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” But there’s more going on here than simply keeping the Messianic promises of Genesis 12 alive. Paul, in Romans 8, echoes the thought expressed in these words, applying them directly to God the Father saying, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32).

RESPOND

1. What caught your attention from Sunday’s sermon? What are you still thinking about/mulling over? What questions did Sunday’s sermon raise that remain unanswered in your mind?
2. Hebrews 11:19’s description of our narrative in Genesis 22 as a type (cf. NASB) raises the issue of typology in biblical studies. According to Roy Zuck, “A type may be defined as an Old Testament person, even, or thing having historical reality and designed by God to prefigure (foreshadow) in a preparatory way a real person, event, or thing so designated in the New Testament that corresponds to and fulfills (heightens) the type.” What other types are you aware of in Scripture? Of what value are types in our day-to-day faith walk?
3. How does it help to think of Jesus explaining his Calvary work through this event in Isaac’s life? Do you think this would be helpful for you in any evangelistic opportunities you might have with members of the Jewish community?
4. Recalling that atonement literally means “at-one-ment,” what encouragement is there for you in the reminder that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins?
5. Given our discussion tonight, how can we be praying for ourselves and for our church?