

"I highly recommend this work that will deepen your appreciation for what the Father and Son went through. The excellent insights will encourage your soul."

Dr. Paul Benware—Professor, Pastor, Conference Speaker, and Author

A FATHER OFFERS HIS SON



*The True and Greater Sacrifice
Revealed Through Abraham and Isaac*

Scott LaPierre

"As a jeweler holds a gemstone and examines each priceless, shining facet, Pastor Scott holds high this picture of heaven's sacrificial love and examines every detail."

Cary Green—Senior Pastor, Speaker, Missionary, and Church Planter

Have you ever wondered why God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son in Genesis 22? The Angel stopped Abraham showing God did not intend for him to kill Isaac, but what did God desire? God wanted to test Abraham, and readers will discover the account primarily reveals:

- In human terms what God would do with His Son two thousand years later
- The many ways Abraham and Isaac are a picture of God and His Son
- The tremendous love of God shown through Christ's sacrifice

Genesis 22 is not primarily about Abraham and Isaac. God and Jesus are the true and greater Father and Son shining forth in the account. Abraham did not spare his son but was willing to deliver him up for God. Likewise, God "did not spare His Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32).

Learn the remarkable parallels between God and Abraham, and Jesus and Isaac. With thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter, the book is perfect for personal use or small groups.

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Scott is the senior pastor of Woodland Christian Church and a conference speaker. He and his wife, Katie, grew up together in northern California, and God has blessed them with seven children.

Praise for *A Father Offers His Son*

“A Father Offers His Son will stimulate your mind and encourage your soul. You will be refreshed by the analysis of this familiar account from Genesis 22. This book has good theology and is a wonderful, enjoyable read. There are excellent insights about that event on Mount Moriah, and they will challenge your thinking. This work lifts up our Lord Jesus Christ, and it will deepen your appreciation for what He and the Father went through to bring us back into fellowship. I highly recommend it.”

Dr. Paul Benware—Professor of Bible and Theology at Moody Bible Institute and the Master’s University, Pastor, Conference Speaker, and Author

“Abraham’s intended sacrifice of Isaac is a rare and poignant picture of the unfathomable cost to the Father who sacrificed His Son for us. This book is a wonderful and touching treatment of that passage. As a jeweler holds a gemstone in the light and turns it slowly examining each priceless, shining facet, Scott LaPierre holds high this picture of heaven’s sacrificial love, and he slowly, unhurriedly, examines its every detail. *A Father Offers His Son* is beautifully biblical, incredibly insightful, and remarkably readable.”

Cary Green—Speaker, Missionary, Church Planter, and Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Bible Church

A FATHER OFFERS HIS SON

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. The Old Testament Is about Jesus	5
2. Genesis 22:2–3 Isaac and Jesus Were... Part I.....	17
3. Genesis 22:4–6 Isaac and Jesus Were... Part II ...	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. Genesis 22:7–10 Isaac and Jesus Were... Part III	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Genesis 22:11–12 Together on Mount Moriah	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. Genesis 22:13–19 Substitutions, Seeds, and Brides	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7. Learning from Abraham's Example.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8. The Wisdom of Fearing God	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9. God Prepares His People.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
10. The Lamb That Makes Christianity the Opposite	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Notes	36

Introduction

I became a Christian in my early twenties. Soon after, I started reading the Bible for the first time. Like many people, I began “in the beginning” at Genesis 1:1. I read some accounts I was already familiar with: creation, the fall, Cain and Abel, and the flood. I did not struggle with much of what I read, not even the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then everything came to a screeching halt when I read Genesis 22:1–2:

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!”

And he said, “Here I am.”

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.”

I thought, “God made Abraham wait so long for this son. Why would He then make such a cruel request? I can understand God calling down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, but how could He ask Abraham to sacrifice his own son?” As a new Christian, I did not understand. After careful studying, I realized God did not intend for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. We know that because the

A Father Offers His Son

Angel stopped him: “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him (Genesis 22:12a).” If God did not want Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, then what did He want? The answer is twofold.

First, he wanted to test Abraham. We read that in the first verse of the chapter. God’s request had never been anything but a test—not to see Abraham sacrifice Isaac, but to see whether Abraham would do it. When Abraham revealed he would obey God’s command, the Angel stopped him. Abraham passed the test, and there was no reason for it to continue.

Second, God wanted a picture of what He would do with His Son two thousand years later. He wants us to understand the sacrifice He made, so He put it in human terms. The Angel of the LORD commended Abraham for not withholding his son:

- Genesis 22:12b—[He] said, “For now I know that you fear God, since *you have not withheld your son*, your only son, from Me.”
- Genesis 22:16—[He] said, “Because you have done this thing, and *have not withheld your son*, your only son.”

God had no intention of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, but this account looked forward to what God had every intention of doing with Jesus. Abraham did not spare his son but was willing to deliver him up, and Romans 8:32 says, “[God] *did not spare His own Son*, but delivered Him up

Introduction

for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

Let me make three requests for you to keep in mind as you read *A Father Offers His Son...*

First, God wants us to appreciate His love for us. So, as you read consider how hard this was for Abraham. When you put yourself in Abraham’s place, you develop some idea of how heart-wrenching it was for God. Do you have a son? What if God made this request of you? As you read about the sacrifice Abraham was willing to make, think on the even greater sacrifice God was willing to make and why He was willing to make it—His great love for us: “*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8).

Second, Jesus wants us to appreciate the sacrifice He made for us. So think of what it was like for Isaac. When you put yourself in Isaac’s place, you can identify with how hard it was for Jesus. What if you received the same request Isaac received? As you consider the sacrifice Isaac was willing to become, reflect on the even greater sacrifice Jesus became. In John 15:13, Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

Third, keep this analogy in mind, so you do not “settle for scraps.” Imagine that you prepare a delicious feast for your friends, but when they arrive, they sit on the floor and eat the crumbs that fall from the table. If you read the account of Abraham and Isaac and fail to see God the

A Father Offers His Son

Father and His Son, you are eating the crumbs. You have missed the wonderful feast that has been prepared for you.

Genesis 22 is not primarily about Abraham and Isaac. Yes, they are present, but you want to see the true and greater Father and Son in the story. John 12:20–21 says:

Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “*Sir, we wish to see Jesus.*”

Desiring to see Jesus should be our hearts’ cry! My desire for you as you read this book is that you see Jesus and that by seeing Him, you grow in your love and thankfulness for Him.

Chapter 1

The Old Testament Is about Jesus

Many people search for Jesus. In the Bible, we have an account of someone finding Him and recognizing He is the Messiah. The person was Philip and he wanted his friend, Nathaniel, to meet Him too. When Philip spoke to Nathaniel, he revealed why he thought Jesus was the Messiah: “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the Prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” (John 1:45). The “Law and the Prophets” was a title for the Old Testament before the New Testament was written. Philip understood the Old Testament was about Jesus, which is why he believed Jesus was the Messiah. He expected Nathaniel to be convinced He was the Messiah as well because he would also recognize Him as the One identified in the Law and Prophets.

A Father Offers His Son

According to Jesus, the Old Testament is about Him:

- Luke 24:27—“Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”
- Luke 24:44—[Jesus] said, “All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”
- Hebrews 10:7—[Jesus said,] “Behold, I have come – in the volume of the book it is written of Me.”

How was the Old Testament about Jesus? Jesus was primarily revealed in two ways. First, the Old Testament contained prophecies of Jesus. For example these verses prophesy Jesus would:

- Be from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10)
- Receive King David’s throne (2 Samuel 7:12–13)
- Be spat upon and beaten (Isaiah 50:6)
- Be silent in the face of accusations (Isaiah 53:7)
- Spend a season in Egypt (Hosea 11:1)
- Ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)

And the list goes on. And on. And on. Jesus fulfilled around 350 prophecies in His first coming.¹

The second way the Old Testament reveals Jesus is through types or shadows:

The Old Testament Is about Jesus

- Hebrews 10:1 says, “The law [was only] a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities” (ESV).
- Colossians 2:16–17 says a “festival or a new moon or sabbaths [are] a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”

“Shadows” are a fitting way to describe the types of Christ in the Old Testament because shadows provide an idea of what something looks like without completely revealing the object. The Old Testament does this with Christ. Second, a shadow is evidence that something is casting it, or in the case of Christ, it is Someone. Finally, nobody looks at a shadow and believes it is the real thing. Nobody sees the shadow of a tree or car and thinks it is a tree or car. Shadows have no substance. They are not the reality. In Colossians 2:17, Jesus is the substance and in Hebrews 10:1, the reality is in Christ.

The New Testament identifies many types and shadows of Christ in the Old Testament. For example:

- John 3:14 compares Jesus with the Bronze Serpent: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”
- John 6:32–33 compares Jesus with the manna: “Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

A Father Offers His Son

- Romans 5:14 compares Jesus with Adam: “Adam is a type of Him who was to come.”
- First Corinthians 5:7 compares Jesus with the Passover Lamb: “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”
- First Corinthians 10:4 compares Jesus with the rock that accompanied Israel in the wilderness: “[Israel] drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”
- Hebrews 10:20 compares Jesus’ body with the veil in the temple that when “torn” on the cross revealed the access believers have to the Father: “[We have] a new and living way [to God] which [Jesus] consecrated for us, through the veil, [which] is, His flesh.”

Certain practices looked forward to Christ. The law commanded sacrifices for sins, and each sacrifice looked forward to Jesus—the true and greater Sacrifice for sins. Circumcision has its fulfillment in Christ because He helps us put off our sinful flesh: “In [Christ] you were circumcised... without hands by putting off... the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ” (Colossians 2:11). And Hebrews 4:1–9 says the rest people enjoyed on the Sabbath was a picture of the true and greater rest that’s found in Christ.

Miracles in the Old Testament prefigured some miracles Jesus would perform in a greater way:

The Old Testament Is about Jesus

- Moses unleashed ten judgments on one nation (Exodus 7–12), but Jesus will unleash twenty-one judgments on the whole earth: “And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!’” (Revelation 6:15–16). God took Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11), but Jesus ascended to heaven on His own (Acts 1:9).
- Elisha fed one hundred men with twenty loaves (2 Kings 4:42–44), but Jesus fed 5,000 and 4,000 men with five and seven loaves (Matthew 14:13–21 and 15:32–39).
- Elisha cleansed one man of leprosy (2 Kings 5:1–14), but Jesus cleansed ten men (Luke 17:11–19).
- Elisha knew what Gehazi had done (2 Kings 5:26), but Jesus knows what all men have done (John 2:24).
- Elisha’s death gave one man temporary life (2 Kings 13:21), but Jesus’ death gives eternal life to many (Romans 5:18).

What is the purpose of all the prophecies and shadows? To lead people to Christ! Jesus said, “All the prophets and the law prophesied until John” (Matthew 11:13). Jesus was veiled throughout the Old Testament in the types and shadows, but when John the Baptist arrived as Jesus’

forerunner, He was no longer veiled. John pointed at Him and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

The Old Testament Serves as a Treasure Map

Paul asked a question many people would answer incorrectly:

Galatians 3:19a—“What purpose then does the law serve?”

Typical answers would be something like, “To show you how to be a good person,” or “To help you get to heaven.” The law serves the opposite purpose! Instead of showing us how to be good, it shows us we are *not* good. When we become familiar with the law and see what it requires to be “good”—or righteous—we see we “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Galatians 3:19b—“It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come...”

The New Testament was written in Greek, and the word for “transgression” is *parabasis*, which means, “going over.”² People transgress when they know where God has drawn the line, but they step over it anyway. Although, people can only transgress if they know where the line is drawn. The law reveals the line, and thereby also our

The Old Testament Is about Jesus

sinfulness. Romans 3:20 says, “for by the law *is the knowledge of sin*.” The law helps us see our need for a Savior by revealing our sinfulness to us. When we look at the standard the law sets, we see how far short we fall from keeping it.

Romans 5:20 says “the law entered that the offense might abound.” This does not mean God gave the law so we would sin more. Instead, God gave the law so our sins would become clear. They would seem to be “abounding” or springing up around us. In Romans 7:7, Paul said, “I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’” Paul did not know he was sinning until he learned the law said not to covet!

We naturally think we are good. Proverbs 16:2 and 21:2 say, “All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes,” and Proverbs 30:12 says, “There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filthiness.” How could filthy people think they are pure? They are not familiar with God’s law that reveals their sinfulness to them. Jeremiah had one of the most painful ministries in Scripture because he was addressing sinful people who thought they were good. Jeremiah 2:23 and 35 record his and God’s efforts at reaching them:

[Jeremiah said], “How can you say, ‘I am not polluted, I have not gone after the Baals’? See your way in the valley; know what you have done: you are a swift dromedary breaking loose in her ways.”

A Father Offers His Son

[God said], “Yet you say, ‘Because I am innocent, surely His anger shall turn from me.’ Behold, I will plead My case against you, because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’”

God said He would judge them because they were sinners who refused to acknowledge they were sinners! The problem with people who think they are not sinners is they see no need for a Savior. People only want a parachute when they know the plane is crashing; a cure when they learn they have a disease; or the fire department when they know there is a fire. The law says, “Your plane is crashing... you’ve got a disease... there is a fire!” This is what Jesus meant in Luke 5:31 when He said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.” The law tells people they are sick.

Despite how important the law is, it does not serve the same purpose throughout our lives. Paul says it lasts until we come to faith in Jesus (the Seed).

Galatians 3:23—“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.”

We should not interpret this literally to mean there was a time when there was not faith. Justified means “declared righteous,” and the law cannot justify us because we are too sinful to obey it perfectly; therefore, God graciously allows justification to take place by faith. He says to wretched sinners, “Because of your faith in My Son, I will

The Old Testament Is about Jesus

give you His righteousness.” Sadly, those unfamiliar with the gospel claim they are righteous because of the way they live, but the way they live only demonstrates their unrighteousness.

Two thousand years before Christ came, Genesis 15:6 says, “[Abraham] believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” Abraham was justified by faith. Believers in the Old Testament looked forward to Christ’s coming like believers in the New Testament look back on Christ’s coming. “Before faith” means before people put their faith in Christ. Until then the law “held [them] in custody” (NIV) or “kept [them] captive and imprisoned” (ESV).

Galatians 3:24—“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

When people become Christians, the Old Testament served its purpose in being a tutor—or treasure map—that led them to Christ.

Galatians 3:25—“But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

Just as “before faith came” meant before putting faith in Christ, “after faith has come” means after putting faith in Christ. At that point, we “no longer [need] a tutor,” because the law has served its purpose in our lives. The

Old Testament served as a map to lead us to the treasure, which is Christ.

Do Not Miss the Treasure

Therefore, if you learned everything the Old Testament could teach—if you could recount every story, recite countless verses—but it did not lead you to Christ, then you’ve made the same mistake the religious leaders made in Jesus’ day. Jesus criticized them saying, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me... If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for He wrote about Me” (John 5:39, 46). If you miss that the Old Testament testifies of Christ, then you’ve failed to let it be your tutor.

If you read about Abraham and Isaac, but you fail to see the true and greater Father and Son, then you missed the treasure. You are looking at the shadow of a tree while saying, “Look at that amazing tree!” If you read Genesis 22 and only see Abraham and Isaac, in the language of Hebrews 10:1, you are missing the “reality,” which is Christ. In the language of Colossians 2:17 you are overlooking the “substance” we find in Christ.

The Old Testament Is about Jesus

Questions

1. Why did Jesus say the Old Testament is about Him?
2. Why is it fitting to call Old Testament types of Christ shadows?
3. What purpose(s) does the law serve?

Chapter 2

Genesis 22:2–3 Isaac and Jesus Were... Part I

Isaac and Jesus Were Only Begotten Sons

Genesis 22:2—“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.’”

The typology between Isaac and Jesus is immediately established strongly. The language used regarding Abraham and Isaac is almost identical to the language used in the New Testament regarding God the Father and His Son. In Genesis 22:2 God said to Abraham, “your son, your only son.” He repeated these words two more times:

- Genesis 22:12—“And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I

A Father Offers His Son

know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, *your only son*, from Me.”

- Genesis 22:16—[The Angel of the LORD] said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, *your only son*.”

God does not waste words in Scripture. When He is repetitive, it is for a reason. God does not use highlighting, italics, underlining, or bold for emphasis, instead He uses repetition. God wants us to recognize Isaac was, “[Abraham’s] son, [his] only son.” Abraham had another son, Ishmael, so how can God refer to Isaac as Abraham’s “only” son? The word “only” does not mean “single.” The Old Testament has three Hebrew words for “only.” Here are two of them:

1. Genesis 6:5—“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only [*raq*] evil continually.”³
2. Genesis 7:23—“So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only [*ak*] Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.”⁴

The Old Testament is primarily written in Hebrew (with small portions written in Aramaic), and the word for “only” in Genesis 22:2 is *yachiyd*, which means “unique.”⁵

The Lamb That Makes Christianity the Opposite

It is referring to Isaac being Abraham's special, one-of-a-kind son. The same word translates as "precious" elsewhere in Scripture:

- Psalm 22:20—"Deliver Me from the sword, My precious [yachiyd] life from the power of the dog."
- Psalm 35:17—"Rescue me from their destructions, My precious [yachiyd] life from the lions."

The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT) says yachiyd means, "only begotten son."⁶ This makes Isaac look like Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. "Begotten" does not mean "created." The writers of the Nicene Creed wanted to make sure nobody misunderstood the word, so they said:

I believe... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, *not made*, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made.⁷

The creed teaches Jesus is eternal, and as the Son of God, is equal with God. If begotten does not mean created, what does it mean? The Greek word for "only begotten" is *monogenes*, and it means, "single of its kind."⁸ Again, it means Jesus is God's unique Son. This separates Him from believers who are sons and daughters of God by adoption, and angels who are also called "sons of God"

A Father Offers His Son

(Genesis 6:4, Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7 cf. Hebrews 1:5–14).
Monogenes only occurs nine times in the Scripture:

- Three times Luke used the word to describe parents who lost an “only” (monogenes) child (Luke 7:12, 8:42, and 9:38).
- Five times John used the word to refer to Jesus as “the only begotten (monogenes) Son” (John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9).

The other use identifies the other individual in Scripture given the same title as Jesus. Hebrews 11:17 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac... *His only begotten (monogenes) son.*” God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, instead of Ishmael, because He wanted him to sacrifice his only begotten, special, unique, precious son. This looked forward to God sacrificing His only begotten, special, unique, precious Son.

Isaac and Jesus Were Named by God

Genesis 22:2—“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.”

The mention of Isaac’s name draws a connection to Jesus. Isaac also had the rare distinction of being named by God,

The Lamb That Makes Christianity the Opposite

instead of being named by earthly parents. Notice the parallelism between these verses:

- Genesis 17:19—“Sarah... shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac.”
- Matthew 1:21—“[Mary] shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.”

Isaac and Jesus Were Loved by Their Fathers

Genesis 22:2—“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.’”

The “Principle of First Mention” encourages Bible scholars to take notice of the first time words are used in the Old and New Testaments, and even in books of the Bible.⁹ The idea is God reveals the truest meaning of a word when it first occurs. Genesis 22:2 contains the first use of the word “love.” Considering the different relationships involving love—for example, mother to a son, daughter to a father, sister to a brother, husband to a wife—makes it more significant that the first time the word “love” is in the Old Testament, it describes the love a father feels toward his son.

The first time the word “love” occurs in the New Testament also describes a Father’s love for a Son. God’s words at Jesus’ baptism echo His words to Abraham:

A Father Offers His Son

“This is My Son, *whom I love*” (Matthew 3:17 NIV). The parallel verses in Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22 are also the first time the word love is used in each gospel. As Isaac was the object of his father’s love toward the beginning of the Old Testament, so too was Jesus the object of His Father’s love toward the beginning of the New Testament.

Isaac and Jesus Reveal God’s Love for the World

God stated His love for Jesus at the beginning of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; however, a change takes place in John’s gospel. The first time John uses the word love he describes God’s love, not for His Son, but for the world—a love so great that God was willing to sacrifice the Son He stated His love for in the previous three gospels: “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” (John 3:16). Abraham loved his son but was willing to give him up because of his love for God. Similarly, God the Father loved His Son, but He was willing to give Him up because of His love for us.

Isaac and Jesus Were “Offered” Up

Genesis 22:2—“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.’”

The Lamb That Makes Christianity the Opposite

The Hebrew word for “offered” is *alah*, but it does not mean “given” or “presented” as we would expect. It means, “to go up, ascend, climb, be taken or lifted up.”¹⁰ The idea is that when something is sacrificed, it is “lifted” up to God. Of the eight hundred eighty-nine times *alah* occurs in the Old Testament, six hundred seventy-six times it translates as “up.” When Abraham was commanded to “offer” Isaac, he was essentially commanded to “lift him up.”

Jesus spoke of His sacrifice this way:

- John 3:14—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even *so must the Son of Man be lifted up.*”
- John 12:32—“If *I am lifted up* from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

Isaac and Jesus Were Burnt Offerings

Genesis 22:2—“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.’”

God did not just ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. He specifically said to “Offer him as a burnt offering.” Again, God is repetitive to make sure we do not miss this. The words “burnt offering” occur six times between verses two and thirteen. Almost every other verse reminds us Isaac was to be a burnt offering.

A Father Offers His Son

Leviticus 1 describes burnt offerings. They were voluntary acts of worship to express devotion to God, or they could serve as an atonement for unintentional sins. The meat, bones, and organs were completely burnt, and this was God's portion. The animal's hide was given to the Levites, who could later sell it to earn money for themselves.

Burnt offerings make a fitting picture of Christ. Three times they are called "an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD" (Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17). Paul applies this imagery to Jesus: "[Christ] has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:2). The key verse is Leviticus 1:4. Let's look at it, piece-by-piece:

- Leviticus 1:4a says "[The priest] shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering." This communicated the transmission of the sin to the sacrifice, and it looked to the way our sins are transmitted to Christ. Isaiah 53:6 says "the LORD has laid on [Jesus] the iniquity of us all." In many pictures of the account, Abraham has the knife in one hand, and his other hand is on Isaac's head to maintain the imagery.
- Leviticus 1:4b says the burnt offering "will be accepted on [the sinner's] behalf" looking to the way Christ died in our place.

The Lamb That Makes Christianity the Opposite

- Leviticus 1:4c says the burnt offering will “make atonement for [the sinner]” looking to the way Jesus made atonement for our sins.

Leviticus 6:11 says the priest shall, “carry the ashes [of the burnt offering] outside the camp.” Hebrews 13:12–13 uses the same language discussing Christ’s sacrifice: “He... suffered *outside the gate*. Therefore let us go forth to Him, *outside the camp*, bearing His reproach.” Leviticus 1:9 and 13 say “the priest shall burn all on the altar.” Burnt offerings were completely consumed, and Jesus is the true and greater Burnt Offering who was willing to be completely consumed for our sins.

Isaac and Jesus Were Sacrificed In Jerusalem

Genesis 22:2—“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*.’”

Jerusalem has a rich history. It is mentioned six hundred forty-three times in Scripture, which is much more than any other location. This does not even include the times it is called Zion, the City of David, or referenced indirectly. Babylon is second, occurring only two-hundred sixty-two times. Jerusalem is first mentioned in Genesis 14:18 when Melchizedek, the “King of Salem,” shows up in Scripture.

A Father Offers His Son

“Salem” means “peace,” hence Jerusalem being “The City of Peace.”

Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God told them He would choose a place for Himself: “You shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go” (Deuteronomy 12:5; also 11, 14, 18, 21, and 26).

The Canaanites controlled the Promised Land when Israel entered it. Since Jebusites inhabited Jerusalem, it was called “Jebus” (Joshua 10:1, 3, 5, 23). Joshua 15:63 says: “As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Israel could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.”

The Jebusites remained in Jerusalem until David conquered it, drove out the Jebusites, and made it his capital. Second Samuel 5:6–7, 9 records:

[David] and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, “You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,” thinking, “David cannot come in here.” Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).

Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward.

The Lamb That Makes Christianity the Opposite

While David lived in the palace, he decided God should have His own “house.” Second Samuel 7:1–2 records:

Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.”

Although David’s desire was good, God told him his son, Solomon, would build the temple instead (2 Samuel 7:13). Second Chronicles 3:1 says:

Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem *on Mount Moriah*, where the LORD had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of [Araunah] the Jebusite.¹¹

Genesis 22:1 says, “God tested Abraham,” and the test was to see whether Abraham would sacrifice his son. Abraham could pass this test anywhere, but God said to “offer [Isaac]... on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” Consider the following:

- God had Abraham travel fifty miles over three days from Beersheba to Jerusalem.
- God showed Abraham the specific location to sacrifice Isaac.

A Father Offers His Son

- The account serves as a picture of what God would later do with His Son.

More than likely the location God revealed to Abraham was Calvary or Golgotha. “Moriah” means, “chosen by Jehovah,”¹² and God chose this location for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac because two thousand years later God would sacrifice His Son on this same mountain:

The decision of God to establish his temple at Moriah in Jerusalem has affected all history; for this mountain became the focus of the Holy City, where His Son was crucified. And it will continue to affect history; for from this ‘city He loves,’ He will someday rule the nations of the earth.¹³

Isaac and Jesus Were Accompanied by Two Men on Their Way to Be Sacrificed

Genesis 22:3, 5—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... 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.”

Isaac was accompanied by two men on his way to being sacrificed like Jesus was accompanied by two men when

The Lamb That Makes Christianity the Opposite

He was sacrificed. Matthew 27:38 says, “Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.” The two men were not able to witness what took place between Abraham and Isaac. Similarly, when Jesus was sacrificed, nobody could see exactly what took place between God the Father and God the Son. When Jesus was on the cross, Matthew 27:45 says, “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.” The darkness concealed the divine transaction when our sins were placed on Christ.

Questions

1. List the parallels between Isaac and Jesus found in Genesis 22:2–3.
2. Can you think of any other similarities in these verses between Isaac and Jesus and Abraham and God? If so, what are they?
3. How does Jesus' sacrifice reveal God's love?

About the Author

Scott is the senior pastor of Woodland Christian Church in Woodland, Washington and a conference speaker. He and his wife, Katie, grew up together in northern California, and God has blessed them with seven children.



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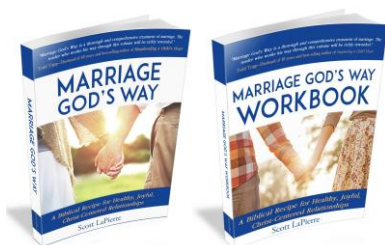
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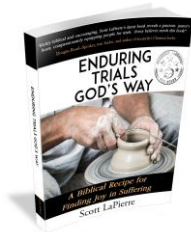
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Notes

¹ “353 Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ.” <http://www.accordingtothescritures.org/prophecy/353prophecies.html>

² “G3847 - parabasis – Strong’s Greek Lexicon (KJV).” Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 6 Jul, 2018. <https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3847&t=KJV>

³ “H7535 - raq – Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon (NKJV).” Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 11 Jul, 2018. <https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=H7535&t=NKJV>

⁴ “H389 – ‘ak – Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon (NKJV).” Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 11 Jul, 2018. <https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=H389&t=NKJV>

⁵ “H3173 - yachiyd – Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon (KJV).” Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 6 Jul, 2018. <https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strong=H3173&t=KJV>

⁶ *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWoT) R. Laird Harris, editor, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., associate editor, Bruce K. Waltke, associate editor. Chicago: Moody

Press, 1980. Deals with Hebrew/Aramaic words in the Old Testament that have a theological significance.

⁷ Along with the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed is the most universally accepted statement of the Christian Faith. The Roman Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicea to try to unify the Christian church with one doctrine, especially regarding the Trinity and deity of Jesus. The Nicene Creed was adopted at the council in A.D. 325.

For further information, visit:
<https://www.gotquestions.org/Nicene-creed.html>

⁸ "G3439 - monogenēs – Strong's Greek Lexicon (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 6 Jul, 2018.
<https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=g3439&t=kjv>

⁹ "What Is the Law of First Mention?" Got Questions.
<https://www.gotquestions.org/law-of-first-mention.html>. Accessed 20 Aug, 2018.

¹⁰ "H5927 - `alah – Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (NKJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 11 Jul, 2018.
<https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5927&t=NKJV>

¹¹ The parallel account in Chronicles says "Ornan," which is a variant of "Araunah."

¹² "H4179 - Mowriyah – Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 6 Jul, 2018.
<https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H4179&t=KJV>

- ¹³ Barker, Kenneth L. and John R. Kohlenberger III. *Expositor's Bible Commentary – Abridged Edition Old Testament*. Zondervan, 2017.