

GENESIS –Lesson 41

Learn: I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:1, 2

Read: Genesis 2: 1-24

Since Genesis 21:34 mentions “many days” and Genesis 22:1 is introduced by the phrase “after these things,” the inference is that the narrative of Genesis 22 took place many years after the birth of Isaac. Isaac was no longer a child, but certainly at least in his teens, and quite possibly twenty-five or thirty years old. He was thirty seven when his mother died. While it is true that he is called a “lad” (verses 5, 12), the Hebrew word (naar) is very flexible in meaning. Most frequently it is translated either as “servant” or as “young man.” In fact, the same word is used here in Genesis 22:5 in connection with the “young men” that went with Abraham and Isaac. Since exactly the same word is used, in the same verse, for the two servants and for Isaac, it is clear that the meaning in Isaac’s case should also be “young man.”

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1. What came to pass after these things? vv 1, 2
2. Scripture does not tell us anything of Abraham’s thoughts when the LORD placed this difficult test before him. It only tells us of Abraham’s actions. What did Abraham do? v 3

Now, of course, God did not really intend that Abraham should slay Isaac. Though it was certainly true that the nations around them believed in child sacrifice to their gods. The archeological evidence is abundant.

3. What do we know about God as regards human sacrifice from Jeremiah 7:30, 31
4. Looking carefully at verse 2, we see that the LORD did not tell Abraham to slay Isaac, though this is naturally the connotation that Abraham would place on the command.

But the LORD only told Abraham to _____ him for a burnt offering.

5. Likewise, what does the Lord command each of us to do in Romans 12:1?

I Corinthians 6:19, 20?

Why?

Perhaps Abraham and Sarah had come to love Isaac too much. There was a danger they might forget God by too much attention to God's promises. God did not want Isaac slain, but He did want Abraham's full love. Therefore, "God did test Abraham."

6. This is the first occurrence in the Bible of the word translated "tempt" (Hebrew nasah). It does not, of course, mean "tempt to do evil." What does James 1:13 tell us?

"Tempt" as used in Genesis 22:1 means to "test" or "try" and, in fact, most of the times is translated "prove." Jesus, for example, was "tempted," but this does not mean He could have sinned. Rather, He was "proved," or "approved," so everyone could see that, in spite of the greatest tests to which He could conceivably be subjected, He would stand spotless and blameless. The engineer may know full well that his design will stand stress and strain to which it is subjected, because he knows it has been designed properly. Nevertheless, the construction specifications will require that it be tested- not to assure the engineer, but to assure the public, that it will stand.

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7. How did God describe who Isaac was to Abraham? v 2

8. This description of Abraham's love for his son has more meaning than appears at first. And this is the first time the word "love" is used in the Bible. This is also a "type" or picture of God the Father's love for His Son. What do the following verses tell us? Matthew 3:16, 17

Luke 3:22

Mark 1:11

9. Where did the LORD tell Abraham to go in order to “offer” his son? v 2

How far was that place from where Abraham lived? v 4

Why would God tell Abraham to go so far, to just this spot? There is no explanation in the text; but there must have been a reason, since God is not capricious. The answer can only be that God knew this would be the place where later His temple would be built. (II Chronicles 3:1). Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac was to foreshadow all the sacrifices that would later be offered in this place, which in turn were types and shadows of the one great Sacrifice that would be offered one day nearby, when the Father would offer the Son as the Savior of the world.

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10. What did Abraham say to his young men that shows us his complete trust that God is true and that He would keep His promise of making a great nation of Isaac ? v 5

Abraham said that he and his son were going to “worship” God. “Worship” means to “bow down.” Singing hymns and giving testimonies, hearing a preacher and enjoying Christian fellowship is not “worship.” To worship God is simply to bow down to His will, recognizing and acknowledging that His will is best. What He does is right by definition, whether we understand it or not. His will may involve waiting and suffering, even dying; but if it is His will, then we must bow down to it and accept it with thanksgiving. It is then, and only then, that we “worship” God.

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11. What is shown in verses 7, 8 about Abraham and Isaac’s relationship to each other?

What can we understand about each of their relationships to the LORD?

The writer would have us know beyond question that Abraham was not compelling his son to go; instead, Isaac willingly accompanied his father. We must remember that Isaac was a grown man, no doubt much stronger than his father, and could easily have escaped if he wished. He certainly could have guessed his father’s intentions.

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12. From Matthew 26:39; Hebrews 5:8, how does Jesus set the example for us?
13. How could Abraham make the choice to obey God in what appears to be an impossible command? Hebrews 11:17-19
14. At what point did the angel of the LORD call to Abraham? vv 10, 11
15. Why did the LORD wait until that point to speak? v 12
16. Back in verse 8 Abraham had told Isaac, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt offering.” How was that provision made? v 13
17. What name did Abraham give that place where the LORD provided a substitute?
v 14
Jehovah-jireh means “the LORD will see to it” or the LORD will provide.”
18. At what point did the “angel of the LORD” speak to Abraham the second time?
vv13-15
19. How do verses 16 -18 prove that the “angel of the LORD” who spoke to Abraham in verse 15 is God?
20. What reason did the LORD give for His blessing upon Abraham and his seed?
vv 16-18
21. What did Jesus tell us in Matthew 10:37?
22. When God made His oath in verse 16, why is it that He swore by Himself?
Hebrews 6:13-18

23. What are the four blessings that were given to Abraham? vv 16-18

Three times in this promise, God used the word “seed.” At that time, Abraham had only one seed, Isaac, but that seed was to be multiplied and to bring blessing to all.

Just in these recent times alone the Jewish people have brought much good to the world by their inventions alone, one example being drip irrigation. There are more Jewish Nobel winners than from any other nationality. But those are only temporal blessings. Nevertheless, the fact that God stressed the word in the singular, rather than the plural, was significant in that it would be through the Abrahamic nation that the world’s Savior would one day come. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16). And, surely, rich blessings have indeed come through Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

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It is instructive to note God’s comparison of Abraham’s seed to the sand and to the stars. To the naked eye, one can count approximately three thousand stars. Abraham recognized that God was saying his descendants would be impossible to count. But did it sound as though He were making an “unscientific” comparison when He likened the stars to the sand? In our modern day of giant telescopes, we know that such a comparison is very appropriate. No one knows the exact number of the stars but it can be roughly estimated, for the observable universe at least, as approximately 10^{25} . Since there are approximately 10^{15} square feet of area on the earth’s surface, and approximately 10 million grains of sand in a cubic foot of sand, if we assume that there is an average of 1,000 feet of unconsolidated sediments around the surface of the earth (probably deeper than this on the ocean floor, but shallower on the land surfaces), then the number of sand sized particles would be calculated to be also 10^{25} . Although such a calculation may well be considerably in error, it at least shows that the stars and the sand are of about the same order of magnitude number. This fact could not have been discovered by man without a telescope; so it constitutes one of the many remarkable examples of modern scientific truth found in the pages of the Bible long before scientists could have learned them by the scientific method.

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