

The God of the Mountains (2) Mount Moriah

Mountain top experiences can be unforgettable. The views can be often breath taking. We get a whole different perspective of things when we view them from lofty mountain heights, often reflecting upon the wonders of God's creation. What times of meditation and communion can be experienced when we are on the mountain top.

We often associate times of blessing and the goodness of God, when things are going well, with being on the "*mountain*". When we experience trial and difficulty and discouragement, we associate those times with being in the "*valley*".

However, there can be times of trial and testing on the mountain top as well as in the valley. This was certainly true in the case of Abraham, when the Lord said to him, "*take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of*" (Gen. 22:2).

God had a plan and a specific place in mind before He called Abraham to offer up his son. This is also true in the case of the Lord Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. Peter spoke of the death of the Lord Jesus, "*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*" (Acts 2:23). In the book of Revelation, John referred to the eternal purposes of God in salvation through the blood of the Lamb, when he wrote, "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (Rev. 13:8).

This would be the greatest test of faith that Abraham would be called to endure. All the promises of God to him were centered in Isaac. Amazingly, Abraham, did not falter or hesitate. He was so confident in the faithfulness of God, that he moved out in obedience, accounting that God was able to raise his son from the dead and so fulfill His promises (Heb. 11:19).

The place of sacrifice was three day's journey (Gen. 22:4). It is both interesting and instructive, to note that Moses requested that Pharaoh let the people of Israel go three day's journey to sacrifice to the Lord their God (Ex. 3:18).

The three day's journey was a sign and symbol of separation from Egypt. Egypt is a picture of this world. We, as the people of God today, are called to come out from among them and be separate, and have no associations with this ungodly world that would hinder fellowship and communion with God. (2nd Cor. 6:14-18). We need to go the "*three day's journey*", if we are going to know anything of an intimate relationship with our God.

The sacred Scriptures record concerning Abraham and Isaac as they journeyed towards the place of sacrifice, "*they went both of them together*" (Gen. 22:6). The only conversation between the two that is revealed to us, is Isaac's question, "*behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?*". Then we have Abraham's prophetic response, "*my son, God will provide himself a lamb*".

We read of Elijah and Elishah journeying together to the place where Elijah would be taken up to heaven. Elishah said, "*my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof*". (2nd Kings 2:1-11).

The greatest example of Father and Son in communion together is that of the Lord Jesus and His heavenly Father as He travelled toward the place of sacrifice. Just prior to His going to Calvary, He said to His disciples, "*Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall*

be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me” (Jn. 16:32). They went both of them together.

Abraham bound his son and laid him upon the altar. Isaac, who offered no resistance, pictures for us the Lord Jesus, who willingly laid Himself on the altar of sacrifice. Isaiah prophesied concerning the willing sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, *“he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isa. 53:7).*

Before Abraham plunged the knife into his son, the angel of the Lord interrupted him and pointed out a ram caught in the thicket, which Abraham then offered to the Lord in the stead of his son.

Abraham called the name of the place, *“Jehovah Jireh”*, or, *“the Lord will provide”*. Once again, Abraham, initially unaware of the ram in the thicket, prophesied of the Lamb of God’s providing, the Lord Jesus, His only Son, who would offer Himself without spot to God as the only acceptable sacrifice for sin.

How thankful Isaac must have been for the ram which took his place on the altar. It was likely an event which he would never forget. But there was no one to take the place of the Lord Jesus. Rather, it was He that took the place of the guilty and laid down His life, and shed His precious blood, providing forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God.

No doubt, every redeemed child of God will ever remember the fact that another took their place and suffered the wrath of God in their stead. Then in a day soon to come, join their voices together with the myriad of redeemed souls out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation praising the Lamb who has washed them from their sins in His own blood (Rev. 1:5).

Interestingly, Mount Moriah later became the site on which Solomon’s temple was built (2nd Chron. 3:1). Solomon’s temple was God’s dwelling place on earth, where He promised that He would put His name forever (1st Kings 9:3).

How blessed and how wonderful to know that today, Christ dwells in the hearts of His redeemed by faith (Eph. 3:17). *“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).*

*Upon the lonely, skull-like hill,
Thorny crown upon His head;
Submitting to the Father’s will,
Bearing wrath in sinners’ stead.*

*For Him, there was no substitute;
Left alone was He to die;
The Holy God, in heaven, mute,
None to hear His orphaned cry.*

*To the altar by love’s strong cord
Lamb of God for sinners tied;
Redemption through His blood out poured,
Ransom through the Christ who died.*

*Sin has been vanquished, peace is made,
Foes defeated, triumph won;
Christ in glory is now arrayed,
Praise the Father through the Son
Bernie Payne*