

Pictures From Mount Moriah, Part 7

By Gary Shepard

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Bible Text: Genesis 22:1-22
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Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
2031 Burgaw Highway
Jacksonville, NC

Website: www.sovereigngracebaptist.church
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/allsovgrace

"I will sing of my Redeemer
And his wondrous love to me;
On the cruel cross he suffered,
From the curse to set me free.

Sing, O sing of my Redeemer!
With his blood he purchased me;
On the cross he sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.

I will tell the wondrous story,
How my lost estate to save,
In his boundless love and mercy,
He the ransom freely gave.

I will praise my dear Redeemer,
His triumphant power I'll tell:
How the victory he gives me
Over sin and death and hell.

I will sing of my Redeemer
And his heavenly love for me;
He from death to life has brought me,
Son of God, with him to be."

Let's sing our bulletin hymn, "Fear not my people," sung to the tune of, "Oh, for a thousand tongues."

Thank you. Thank you. We welcome each one this morning and we are thankful to the Lord for bringing us through the week and bringing us through all the situations of life. I thought about this verse in Brother Jim Byrd's hymn,

"Though through deep waters we must go,
And fiery tests shall face.

The waters will not overflow,
Nor flames consume his grace."

We have the promise that we will surely have trials and tribulations but the Lord is pleased to deliver his people through and out of them all. We're grateful for his mercy.

We pray this morning for those that are sick, Paul and Reed. We pray for those that are recovering, hope they are doing well, Olivia and Tamara. And we pray for Bill Reece who has been sick, and Mary, she's been sick. We ask the Lord according to his will to bless them and help them each and every one. We pray for my wife Sheila. I had to put her on an airplane this morning. She'll be gone for a couple of weeks and over the coming two weeks, Brother Richard will be speaking for you. We pray for him, support him. I may take a little few days vacation, nothing happens in the Lord's will. And we just are so in need of not just physical blessing but of spiritual blessing. We stand in need of it as a people, a nation. We stand in need of it in every sense of the word.

Let's bow our heads for prayer this morning.

Our Father, we as a weak and frail people, come before you this morning and we pray that we might not only remember our weakness and our frailty and our sinfulness but that we might remember your great grace and mercy as well as your strength and power and ability to save and to help us. We are characterized totally by great need and if we ever get strong in ourselves, independent in our attitudes, Lord, there are so many things to remind us of our great weakness. We can say, Lord, as the psalmist said of Israel, "Had it not been for the Lord." We come into these situations and we toss to and fro, we stagger like a drunken man, and in these times we call upon you and you're pleased out of your grace to hear us, and we say the Lord, had it not been for the Lord, we would have been consumed.

We bring all of these sick ones, healing ones, needy ones, we bring all those that are burdened down with cares and trials and situations of family, loved ones, friends. Lord, we are told to cast all our burdens on you, all our cares upon you in the knowledge that you care for us. We know that you care and do for your people above that which we're able even to think or ask. And when we're not mindful of you, which is so often, you are still mindful of us and your covenant stands and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf is ever like that lamb that John saw, ever fresh, ever living to represent us and to save us.

We pray that in this hour we might be afforded a little time of oasis from this world and its cares, troubles, situations, and grant it that we might engage in true worship, see you once again afresh and anew for who you are, and contemplate your mercies that are new to us every day.

We pray for those that travel. We ask that you might bring them safely home. In all we do, we ask for your watchful care and we offer up to you our thanks and our gratitude for what you do. We thank you most of all for your dear Son and our Savior. We pray that

you would forgive us for the lack of gratitude that we have for him and that you would refresh us to remember just exactly who came and who died in our place. We pray and we ask all of these things in the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn 178, "The Savior, to glorious God," and I want to ask Brother Tim to wait on the congregation.

I'm fighting allergies this morning.

"Once my soul was lost in sin, and I had no peace within
And was wretched and vile as could be,
But my Savior above gave me peace, joy and love,
When he reached down his hand for me.

When he reached down his hand for me,
When he reached way down for me,
I was lost and undone, without God or his Son,
When he reached down his hand for me.

I was there in despair when he came to me there
And he showed me that I could be free,
Then he lifted my feet, he gave me glory complete,
When he reached down his hand for me.

How my heart doth rejoice since he made me his choice,
From the tempest to him I now flee,
Now I lean on his arm, I'm secure from all harm,
Since he reached down his hand for me.

When my Savior reached down for me,
When he reached way down for me,
I was lost and undone, without God or his Son,
When he reached down his hand for me.

Since the Lord gave me peace, heavenly joys there received,
Lord, I give all my life unto thee,
Guide my feet, hold my hand, grant with thee I may stand,
For you reached down your hand for me."

When he reached down for me, he had to reach mighty far down. Way down.

Turn back again this morning to Genesis 22. I'll reread a few verses in our text this morning, beginning in verse 9. This is when Abraham took Isaac up on Mount Moriah at the command of God to offer him as a burnt offering. Verse 9 says,

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 And the angel of the LORD called unto [Abraham] out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. Something seen. The picture and the principle that I want us to see this morning in this text is perhaps one of the most important in the Bible. It's one of the most important pictures and principles in all of scripture, in all the gospel, and it is that of substitution, salvation by and in a substitute.

I read once where an old preacher said, "The substitution of Christ in the place of his people, the imputation of their sins to him and of his righteousness to them, is the central fact of the gospel. But the principle of being saved by what another has done is only possible on the ground that we were lost through what another did. The two either stand or fall together." In other words, if we did not fall in one and on the basis of that principle being Adam, then we cannot be saved on the basis of one, that one being Christ, because we would come into both situations really by nothing that we did. We weren't even born when we fell in Adam, and we were not even born when we're saved in another, the last Adam, Jesus Christ. And this is what we must see and this is what the Spirit of God reveals in the gospel as he did for Abraham.

The Lord Jesus Christ, if you remember in John 8, said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad." He saw by God-given faith the principle upon which men would be saved, that people would be saved, and he saw also that the Lord Jesus Christ would provide a substitute. As a matter of fact, in the book of Galatians, it says that God preached before the gospel unto Abraham. Abraham, by these various pictures, especially this one, he was preached by God the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of substitution, salvation in a substitute. And Abraham saw Christ by faith in this type that God provided because here in our text God provided himself a sacrifice, he provided him an offering, a burnt offering, and he received that sacrifice of which Abraham and Isaac had no part.

Look back in verse 13. Whenever Abraham was about to draw the knife and plunge it into the heart of Isaac his son, shed that blood so that he might be the burnt offering, the angel of the Lord stayed his hand. He stopped him and it says in verse 12, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him." Don't touch this boy. He is not the sacrifice. I cannot accept him even as a type of the sacrifice because he, like you, is a

sinner. I must provide myself a sacrifice. So look what it says in verse 13, "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns." Do you think that was just an accident? Do you just think that maybe was something that happened to this poor lamb out of a coincidence? No, God provided him a sacrifice, he provided him what he required, he provided him this ram whose horns were caught in a thicket, "and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering," - watch this - "in the stead of his son." He offered him up in the stead of his son, that is, he offered him up as a substitute, as a sacrifice for his son. And this is not only what is taught as the way of salvation, as the way of God's salvation here in the Old Testament, it is the same exact thing that we find in the New Testament.

Hold your place and turn to John 10. John 10, which we find as a very informative and very rich and very wonderful chapter of scripture concerning the work of Christ as a shepherd, a shepherd of his sheep. In John 10:11, he says this, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." We know exactly who he died for. We know his death was a voluntary death. We know that it was the gift of God. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And then in verse 15 he says this, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." In other words, Christ tells us here that his death was a substitutionary death on the cross. He says here he is the good shepherd, that is, he is a sinless perfect shepherd. He says he is the good shepherd in contrast to every false shepherd. He says as this shepherd he saves the sheep by his death and he does it willingly and voluntarily. He lays down his life for the sheep, not for the goats. In other words, when Christ died in the place of his people, they were already his sheep. They didn't become sheep by anything they did, even by believing. They didn't become sheep by their decision or their choice or their will. They were already his sheep and he laid down his life for them.

But what does it mean, "I lay down my life for the sheep"? That word "for" that we find in verse 11 and in verse 15 means "instead of," just like we read over in Genesis 22. Abraham took that ram that was caught in the thicket by the horns and he offered him up as a burnt offering in the stead of, or in the place of his son, in the place of Isaac, or for the sake of. And that is the doctrine, the plain doctrine of salvation in this substitute. Christ died as the substitute for his sheep. He died what is called a vicarious death. Now we have the pope who blasphemously says that he is the Vicar of Christ, that is, the representative or the one that stands in the place of Christ. That's foolishness. That's not biblical. That's a lie. But what is true is that Christ is the vicar of his people in that he vicariously stood in their place as their substitute and represented them in his life, but moreso in his death and that's what all these sacrifices in the Old Testament showed and the principle they set forth in the death of a substitute and a victim dying in the place of another.

In Leviticus 16 we read this, "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." In other words, the picture there is the sins of Israel, the sins of God's people laid upon and made to meet and transferred, if you

will, to these offerings that were offered, the scapegoat especially as we find represented there in Leviticus 16.

When Daniel comes with his prophecy, he says this of the Messiah, "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." He's going to die but he's not going to die for himself, he's not going to die for his sin, he's going to die as a substitute for his people and the judgment of God will come upon them in him, in the substitute. That's the same thing we find with Noah and his ark. When the wrath of God came against the ark, it came against a substitute. That's the way we see when the Passover lamb was offered over in Egypt that delivered those people out. It was that the sins of the people came to bear on the substitute. And the problem is not only does this godless world know nothing about that, they know nothing primarily about biblical substitution in salvation, they know not what kind of love is demonstrated in that sacrifice.

Paul when he wrote to the church at Galatia, he said this, "Who gave himself," that is, Christ, "Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father." He was there by the will of God. He suffered according to the will of God and in his suffering, he suffered and demonstrated the love of God to his people in suffering for their sins in their place.

When he writes to Titus, he says, "Who gave himself for us," that is, in our place, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." In other words, when this shepherd laid down his life for the sheep, when he poured out his life blood, it was to the satisfaction of God's justice for their sins, and he was suffering the penalty due them in their place. In their place. Instead of them.

And it's so hard to understand for us in the flesh, as a matter of fact, impossible for us to understand and impossible for us to believe apart from his grace, and yet we see that principle every day of our lives. My son when he has to go to work sometimes, he has to go because somebody else could not be there or somebody else had a problem and missed work and he's called in that day to be the substitute. Every sporting event almost you watch, there's that principle, one goes out and another comes in in his place. They have a backup quarterback or something like that, he's the substitute, he's the one who stands in the place of another and performs a work or endures a suffering, whatever it is, but he does it in another's place.

But as our picture says, there was nobody that could do it except one that God provided. A sinner cannot die for a sinner. You, no matter how much you might love me, you cannot die in my place. You cannot because God will not accept it. We may have great friends and dear ones, but we cannot do for them in their place what God alone could do, and what he could do alone for us when he came as a human being to suffer and to die. Because Christ's death satisfied God's judgment and God's justice on the legal grounds of substitution, and so his death must also justly free his sheep from all eternal suffering.

There's a great picture of this found in the gospel of John when they came to get Christ. When those soldiers that were sent of Pilate and the chief priests and all, when they came to get the Lord Jesus Christ and they asked him, "Are you him? Are you the Christ?" And he answered them, "I am. I am." And that's so powerful that when he spoke that as the eternal I Am, they all fell backwards. And then he told them this, he made this statement, he said, "I have told you that I am he. If ye therefore seek me, let these go their way." If you seek me, these have got to go. It's either them or me but it can't be both of us. If you seek me, if I'm come under the determinate counsel of my Father, if you've come to deliver me into the hands of his justice, then these have got to go free because that's the principle of substitution.

And rather than being an offer or rather than being a way, or rather than being an opportunity, this substitutionary work of Christ is an accomplishment. He's already died in the place of his people. He's already put away their sin. He's already offered himself as an offering and a sacrifice for sins forever. He's already finished the work. One who stood in our place as a substitute has done it all in saving us and representing us before God, and dealing with our sins, and enduring the penalty so that there is nothing left that the substitute didn't do.

Sometimes when they put a substitute quarterback in, we're a little disappointed. He's just a substitute. But that's not so with this one because when God stood his Son in our place, when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, when he acted as our advocate and as our Savior, when he accomplished and performed all righteousness in our place, when he did so as God's Son and as God manifest in the flesh, there ain't nothing left to be done. Nothing. There's not one thing that you can glory in. There's not one thing that you can perform that would allow you a boast. There's not anything, even your believing if you believe on Christ and trust him in this sense. There will be no glory to you because that alone is also a gift of God.

Peter said, "For Christ also has suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." What, to give everybody an opportunity? No, he said to bring us to God. He wasn't on a trial run. He wasn't an example. He wasn't doing so many of the things that men look to Christ for but won't look for him as the one thing necessary to be a substitute and to die in our place. He did it to bring us to God and, my friend, everyone he died for as a substitute in their place on that cross, he in that work brought them to God. He brought them all the way.

Matthew 20 says, "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." That's what we find in Isaiah. Turn to Isaiah 53. This whole chapter just screams and cries out salvation by the Messiah who dies as a substitute. Isaiah 53:4 through 6, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He's standing in our place.

Verse 8, "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken." Punished. Christ suffered the punishment due God's elect that are going to be saved. They're going to come forth, they're going to by his Spirit be brought to the sure knowledge and confidence that his work in their place as their substitute saved them. Saved them.

Look down at verse 11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." How is he going to bear their iniquities? He's going to bear their penalty for them. He's going to pay the price for them in their place. God's going to deal with them, every one, in this substitute. Just like all fell in Adam, all in him fell in sin, so will God in grace deal with all his elect in Christ Jesus.

Then verse 12, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great." Oh, he's victorious. He's the victor here. He's the accomplisher. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." All the way through, the substitute.

When you come over to Romans 5, look at Romans 5. In verse 6 Paul writes so clearly here, he says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is the gospel and the gospel is good news to the people of God. Those that want to maintain a salvation by something that they do, some work that they perform, some character that they achieve, who have any hope in themselves whatsoever, he didn't die for them.

But Paul says, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement," or the reconciliation, or the substitution. When you start checking the words that are used here, reconciliation, atonement, that Hebrew word that means atonement which was also the word used when God commanded Noah to pitch the ark, to cover the ark, that word is also the word for atonement and also is connected to the word reconciliation, which is also connected in thought to substitution.

He was delivered for our offenses and raised because of our justification. He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. You see, the very first one to proclaim this gospel was God himself and he did it in the garden, showed us this principle of substitution when Adam and Eve sinned and God took and slew an innocent victim in their place and covered them, made them tunics or coverings, and covered their nakedness. They were saved by a substitute.

So now Paul says it so clearly, "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." So when you look back at our text and you see that Abraham offered this God-provided ram in the stead of his son, he offered him as a substitute and God, what God provides, he will accept. He will accept. All the shepherd died for, the captive go free, the debt is paid. And if you can look to Christ alone, he said, "My sheep hear my voice," but if you can look to Christ alone, you're bound to be one of his sheep, and if he died in your place, rejoice, be at peace. Don't listen to what all these works mongers cry out and the offerings of remedies they have to make us right with God supposedly. As Paul said, "It is Christ that died."

And I thought about that hymn this morning as I was at home, "My faith has found a resting place," and one line in that song says this, "It is enough that Jesus died and that he died for me." If he died as my substitute, if he satisfied God on my behalf, if he paid my debt, I don't owe anything. Either he was doing that or I've got real problems, you've got real problems. But he said it is God, it is Christ that died and he died as a substitute. God offered him in the stead of us and he bore it all.

Father, we thank you this morning for your Son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. In my hand, no price I bring. Simply to his cross I cling." Help us to know, help us to believe, help us to see this principle of substitution. "Payment cannot twice demand, first at my bleeding surety's hand and then again at mine." If he satisfied all that you require, there's nothing left for me to satisfy so what do I do? Thank him and praise him, magnify him, rejoice, give him the credit, be humbled by it, thank him for such amazing love. Help us to do that, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.