

Title: **BEERSHEBA - MORIAH - BEERSHEBA**  
Text: Genesis 21:27-22:19  
Subject: *Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac at Moriah*  
Date: Sunday Morning — January 4, 2009  
Tape # Z-61a  
Introduction:

In Hebrews 5:8 we read that our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, “*Though he were a Son, learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*” And that which was true of our Redeemer, when he walked upon this earth as a man, is true of us. If we are the children of God, as long as we live in this body of flesh, we will be required to learn obedience. And we learn obedience by the things we suffer at the hand of God’s wise and good providence.

The life of the believer is a series of trials, by which his faith is tested, proved, and strengthened. Character is developed by discipline; and God our Father lovingly develops the character of his children by loving discipline. Often, it appears, in the lives of God’s saints there is one great trial of faith, for which all other trials seem to be preparatory. Certainly, that was the case with Abraham and the great trial of his faith revealed to us in Genesis 22.

I want you to turn that chapter and hold your Bibles open. Actually, my text will be Genesis 21:27-22:19. The title of my message is **BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**. Our text begins with Abraham and Abimelech making a covenant at a place Abraham named Beersheba. There he “*called on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God*” (Genesis 21:33). Then Abraham and Isaac go up to the Land of Moriah. There, upon one of the mountains of Moriah, Abraham sacrificed his son Isaac to the Lord his God in a substitute lamb. Then, Abraham, Isaac and the young men, returned to Beersheba and dwelt there (Genesis 22:19).

Genesis 22 is one of the great chapters of the Bible. **Here, for the first time, God shows us, in a vivid picture, the necessity of a human sacrifice for the ransom of our souls.** Because it was a man who brought sin into the world, sin must be removed by a man. Because man had sinned, a man must suffer the wrath of God and die. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. “*But now once in the end of the world hath*” the Man, Christ Jesus “*appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;*” and “*after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the*

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

*right hand of God...For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 9:26; 10:4, 12, 14).*

Genesis 22 records Abraham’s greatest trial and the greatest revelation of the gospel which God made to Abraham. I am sure our Lord was referring to this chapter when he said, “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad*” (John 8:56). This chapter is full of Christ and full of redemption. Genesis 22 could rightly be called, “The Gospel of Moriah.” You may recall that Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah (1 Chronicles 3:1). Adjoining Mount Moriah is Mount Calvary, where our Savior laid down his life for us.

**Proposition:** Obviously, everything in our text has typical and prophetic reference to the redemption of our souls by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. — Everything before us in this passage of Scripture pictures of God’s great sacrifice of his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the place of poor sinners, like you and me.

There are so many things portrayed in this chapter that I cannot possibly cover them all in one message. It is a picture of...

- Great faith!
- God’s great purpose of grace!
- Substitutionary redemption by Christ!
- And God’s great provision of grace for his people in Christ!

But I can only touch the highlights. — **NINE THINGS.**

**“AFTER THESE THINGS”**

Notice first, the time when this trial was brought upon Abraham (v. 1). — “*And it came to pass after these things.*” — After all the other trials, hardships, heartaches and difficulties he had already endured, perhaps Abraham had begun to think, “At last, the storms are over.”

- This is the man who had been called to leave his home and family.
- This is the man who had buried his father, Terah, in Haran.
- This is the man who had to endure the family strife with Lot.
- This is the man who had to go to war with the heathen kings to save Lot.
- This is the man who had to wait 25 years for God to fulfil his promise — Isaac.

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

- This is the man who had seen his brother's family swept away in God's wrath.
- This is the man who had been required to cast his eldest son (Ishmael) out of his house.

Abraham must have thought to himself, after all that he had been through, "Now the worst is over. Now I will live in peace. Ishmael is gone. Hagar is gone. Lot is gone. But I have Sarah and Isaac. All is well." — "*And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt,*" test, try and prove, "*Abraham.*" Abraham had been tested again and again; but now the Lord seems to say, "*My son, give me thine heart*" (Proverbs 23:26).

**Look at that opening line of Genesis 22:1 again. — “And it came to pass after these things.” There must be a specific reference here to the covenant made between Abraham and Abimelech at Beersheba.**

- Beersheba means "**well of oath**" (Genesis 21:31 – margin) or "oath of peace," or "oath of seven." — Abraham sacrificed seven ewe lambs, to be a perpetual witness of the oath and covenant between him and Abimelech. — Seven is the number used throughout the Scriptures for grace and for perfection and completion.
- Beersheba was one of the cities **possessed by the tribe of Judah** (Joshua 15:28). It was allotted to Simeon (Joshua 19:2).
- Throughout the Old Testament, Beersheba seems to have been **the reference point of Israel's history**. — It was the southern most point of the land God gave to Israel.
- At Beersheba Abraham and Abimelech and their children after them (Genesis 21:22-24) were **bound to one another in peace** by a covenant and an oath.

**“GOD DID TEMPT ABRAHAM”**

Second, the one who brought this trial upon Abraham was the Lord his God. — "*God did tempt Abraham*" (v. 1). The word tempt here means, "to try," "to test," or "to prove" (James 1:2, 3, 12). God brought this trial upon Abraham, not because he was angry with him, but because he loved him. The purpose of the trial was to prove to Abraham the reality of his faith and to reveal to Abraham the glory of his grace in Christ.

- When the trial was over, Abraham knew himself better than he did before.

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

- He knew the Triune God better than he did before.
- He knew Christ better than he did before.
- He knew Isaac better than he did before.
- And Isaac knew his father better than he did before.

All through his life God had been preparing Abraham for this event. And now, “*it came to pass after these things.*” Our great, sovereign God does all things “*in due time*” (Romans 5:6). And “*in the fulness of time*” (Galatians 4:4). — “*After these things*” — After the fall, the flood, the exodus, the tabernacle, the law, the prophets, the kings and the priests had all run their course, it pleased God to fulfil every prophecy, pattern, and promise of Holy Scripture by the sacrifice of his only begotten Son.

- All that came before were preparatory events, picturing and pointing to the hour when Christ would die (Acts 10:43; Luke 24:27, 44-46).
- God’s providence is always on time. “*All things are of God*” (2 Corinthians 5:18). And God does all things well. **Learn these three things:**
  1. Our trials always come from our heavenly Father.
  2. Our trials are brought upon us by God to prove and improve our faith.
  3. Our trials reveal Christ and make him more precious.

**A VERY GREAT TRIAL**

Third, read verse 2 and try to realize something of the magnitude of this great trial. It was an indescribably great trial, a very heavy, heavy trial.

“And he said, 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.”

The words of this verse, taken one by one, reveal the greatness of Abraham’s sacrifice, the love behind it and the agony he endured through it. Can you imagine...

- Abraham’s grief when he received this command?
- The sorrow he suffered as he contemplated the death of his son by his own hand?
- The love he must have had for God, to willingly sacrifice his darling Isaac?

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

- The supreme sacrifice he made?

Every word in this verse must have been like a sword in his heart! Yet, there is a greater Sacrifice than that of Abraham. Here the Lord God himself is telling us what he has done for us.

1. **“Take now thy son.”** — The Lord Jesus Christ, whom God sacrificed for us, is himself the Son of God.
2. **“Thine only ~~son~~ Isaac.”** — Our Savior, whom God gave for the ransom of our souls, is God’s “*only begotten Son*” (John 3:16).
3. **“Isaac”** — Isaac means “laughter” or “*delight*.” And Christ is the one, the only one, in whom God delights, in whom God is well pleased.
4. **“Whom thou lovest.”** — God said, “*This is my beloved Son.*” Yet, he sacrificed his darling for us, the very chief of sinners!
5. **“And offer him for a burnt offering.”** — Not just a sacrifice, “*a burnt offering!*” The Lord Jesus Christ is our burnt-offering, our sin-offering, sacrificed for us by the hand of God, according to the will of God (Isaiah 53:10; Hebrews 10:9-10).

(Isaiah 53:10) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

(Hebrews 10:9-10) “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.”

“*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift*” (1 Corinthians 9:15).

**DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME**

Fourth, consider the difficulties Abraham had to overcome to obey God’s command. There were many things Abraham might have argued as reasons for disobedience. But he “*consulted not with flesh and blood.*” **God called Abraham to sacrifice his son, but...**

- The Lord **gave him no reason** for requiring such a sacrifice. — All Abraham had was God’s command.
- The commandment was **contrary to nature, reason, and love.** — But it was crystal clear.

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

- The commandment **appeared to be contrary to the promise of God.** — But it came from God who made the promise.
- If Abraham obeyed God, as he knew he must, he was **sure to suffer** much ridicule, persecution, and reproach for it. — What would he tell Sarah? — What would he say to the Egyptians?

God, give me grace to give you such implicit obedience. **Matthew Henry** wrote, “God’s commands must not be disputed, but obeyed. We must not consult with flesh and blood about them (Galatians 1:15-16), but with a gracious obstinacy persist in our obedience to them.” — “*Whatsoever he saith to you, do it*” (John 2:5).

**ABRAHAM’S SACRIFICE**

Now, in the fifth place, I want us to the sacrifice Abraham made (vv. 3-10). As we read these verses, turn your thoughts away from Abraham. This is a picture of God’s whole purpose of grace and his work of redemption by the sacrifice of Christ.

(Genesis 22:3-10) “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. (4) Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. (5) And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. (6) And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. (7) And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering? (8) And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. (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.”

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

1. **“Abraham rose up early in the morning,” and prepared everything with great care** (vv. 3-4).

(Genesis 22:3-4) “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. (4) Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.”

Abraham had three long days to think about what must be done. As they journeyed those days and slept through those nights, the burden and sacrifice constantly lay upon his heart. But our heavenly Father planned, purposed and ordained the sacrifice of his darling Son for us, not three days, nor three thousand days, but from eternity, before ever the world was made (Revelation 13:8; Ephesians 1:3-4). And he never thought about altering his purpose!

- **Abraham carefully prepared everything for the sacrifice.** And our great God carefully prepared everything for the sacrifice of his dear Son for us (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28).
  - **“Abraham saw the place afar off!”** — So the Lord God, from everlasting set his heart and mind upon the place of sacrifice — Mt. Calvary!
2. **Abraham and Isaac went to the mountain of sacrifice together alone** (vv. 5-8). God is not a stone! He felt the sacrifice!

(Genesis 22:5-8) “And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and **I and the lad** will **go yonder** and **worship**, and **come again** to you. (6) And Abraham **took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac** his son; and he took **the fire in his hand**, and a knife; and they went both of them together. (7) And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering? (8) And Abraham said, My son, **God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering**: so they went both of them together.”

Redemption was the work of God alone, a transaction between God the Father and God the Son. — “*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Twelve went with the Son of God to the

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

Passover. Eleven went with him to the garden. Three went with him to pray. But when he went to the cross, our Savior was alone (Hebrews 1:3).

- The wood was laid upon Isaac's back. — Christ carried his cross.
- The instruments of death were in the father's hands.
- Isaac's question (v. 7) — He knew that God could not be worshipped without a blood sacrifice (Exodus 12:13; Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22).

(Exodus 12:13) "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt."

(Leviticus 17:11) "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul."

(Hebrews 9:22) "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

- "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (v. 8). — This is clearly a prophecy of Christ, the Lamb of God. — He is the Sacrifice for God! — He is the Sacrifice from God! Whatever sacrifice God requires, it is only what God has given! — He is the Sacrifice who is God!

3. **At last they came to the place of sacrifice** (vv. 9-10).

(Genesis 22:9-10) "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."

- Abraham built the altar and laid the wood upon it.
- Abraham bound his son and laid him on the altar.
- Isaac willingly submitted to his father's will.
- Abraham stretched forth his hand to kill his Son! (Zechariah 13:7).

(Zechariah 13:1-7) "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

for uncleanness. — (7) Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”

**SUBSTITUTIONARY REDEMPTION**

Sixth, verses 11-13 reveal a beautiful, blessed picture of substitutionary redemption.

(Genesis 22:11-13) “And the angel of the LORD called unto him 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.”

Once Abraham’s faith was proved, God intervened to save Isaac. And the type changes.

- When God spoke Abraham looked — Faith.
- When he looked, he saw a ram — Christ.
- Notice that that ram was caught in a thicket by its own horns, caught by its own powerful horns! — So Christ was caught in the thicket of our curse, in the thicket of our sin, in the thicket of divine judgment by his own sovereign will and power.
- He offered the ram “*in the stead of his Son!*” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21) “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) 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.”

**JEHOVAH-JIREH**

Seventh, we read in verse 14, “*Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah-jireh!*”

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

- The Lord will see. — He sees our need! — (Righteousness and Atonement).
- The Lord will provide. — What we need — Christ!
- The Lord will be seen in the provision he makes!

**ISAAC EXALTED**

Eighth, when the whole work was done, Isaac, the object of his father's love, was exalted (vv. 15-18; Philippians 2:9-11).

(Genesis 22:15-18) “And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, (16) And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*: (17) That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; (18) And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

- Isaac was promised a great posterity. — “*I will multiply thy seed*” (v. 17). — “*He shall see his seed!*”
- He was made to be a great ruler. — “*He shall possess the gate of his enemies*” (v. 18; John 17:2; Psalm 2:8).
- He became the source of universal blessedness (v. 18; Ephesians 1:3).

(Philippians 2:9-11) “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; (11) And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**BACK TO BEERSHEBA**

Then, ninth, Abraham went back to Beersheba and dwelt there with his young men.

**BEERSHEBA — MORIAH — BEERSHEBA**

(Genesis 22:19) “So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.”

I can almost see the God of Glory sitting yonder on his throne, the place of his oath and his covenant, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, dwelling there with his young men (Justice and Grace — Righteousness and Peace — Truth and Mercy), waiting for his Isaac’s glory to be complete in the salvation of all his chosen, ransomed seed! It is a sure thing, you know. In Christ all the nations of the earth shall be blessed! — “*He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied!*”

(Isaiah 45:20-25) “Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save. (21) Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me. (22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. (23) I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. (24) Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. (25) In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

Amen.