

St. Matthew AME Church
Bible Study
December 13, 2010

God tempted Abraham and told him to take Isaac, his only son and offer him for a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah. Isaac was Abraham and Sarah's only son who was born to them when they were well past the time of child bearing. Abraham was told by God to name his son Isaac which means "because he laughed." Abraham was told to sacrifice his only son to see if there was anything which he would withhold from God. This test was very real. As a test it was designed to prove faith. And for it to be a real test it had to defy logic; it had to be something Abraham wanted to resist. It is one thing to claim to trust God's word when waiting for something; it is quite another thing to trust and obey His word after it is received. Listen carefully to God's word to Abraham, "take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love."

Abraham's response was staggering- he gave instant, unquestioned obedience to God. He took Isaac and went to Mt. Moriah and prepared to offer him there as a sacrifice. However, we should not be deceived this three day journey had to be difficult for Abraham. When they arrived at the place where the Lord told Abraham, he built an altar, put the wood on the altar and then tied up Isaac and put him on the altar. The sacrifice of Isaac would be a demonstration of Abraham's love and devotion to God. This sacrificial offering was his worship of God. A true worshipper holds nothing back from God, but obediently gives Him what He ask.

With Isaac on the altar, Abraham took his knife and prepared to slay Isaac. He was prepared to do what the Lord had commanded. But as he brought his arm down a voice cried out to Abraham and he said, "here I am." And the angel told him not to harm Isaac, for he has proven that he will hold nothing back from God. When Abraham lifted up his eyes he saw a ram caught in the thicket, and took it and sacrificed it on the altar instead of his son. Abraham called the name of the place "Jehovah- jireh", meaning "the Lord will provide."

The encounter of Abraham with God on Mt. Moriah is a prelude of what God will do in the New Testament through His Son. In the first chapter of John's Gospel, John the Baptist declares himself as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord." The next day he sees Jesus coming to him and declares, "behold, the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world." (verse 29) While we rejoice over the birth of Jesus and romanticize His coming, the reality is that Jesus was born to die. Notice the parallels between the experience of Abraham and Isaac and that of God the Father and Jesus the Son.

1. First, Jesus like Isaac is God's only son.
2. God like Abraham loves His Son.
3. God like Abraham is to slay His only Son as a sacrifice

This is where the parallels end.

1. God provides a ram to take Isaacs's place- Jesus in the New Testament is that lamb. God fulfills what Abraham declares (Jehovah-jireh – "the Lord will provide")
2. God tested Abraham with Isaac- Jesus was not a test- He was the sacrificial lamb
3. Jesus death accomplished what the sacrifice of Isaac would not do- atonement (reconciliation-at-one-with God)
4. The blood of Isaac could not do what the blood of Jesus did- (Jesus was the perfect lamb-without sin- blood of Jesus- takes away the sins of the world-without the shedding of blood)

