

## Exegetical Notes – Genesis 22:1-24

### *“The Offering of Isaac”*

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## Genesis 22:1-24

### Verses 1-2

*<sup>1</sup> Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”*

*“Here I am,” he replied.*

*<sup>2</sup> Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”*

- The second question that the Book of Genesis answers is “How do we get along in God’s world God’s way?” The answer to that question is, “we trust God and we obey God.” In this chapter, Abraham is “tested” by God to show him the answer to that question.
- God does not “tempt” anyone to do or not do evil (see James 1:13). However, he does test us at times to affirm truth to us. God knows all things. Therefore, he knows how Abraham will respond to this test. The test is not, therefore, for God, but for Abraham and Isaac and for us. The test affirms the truth taught in the Book of Genesis. This IS God’s world because he made it, and we get along in God’s world, God’s way by trusting God and obeying him.
- “Some time later”... Isaac has grown since the last chapter. He is now able to understand more fully what is going on around him and to learn about the world in which he lives and God.
- God calls Abraham by name and Abraham responds to God’s voice.
- God tells Abraham to take his son Isaac and to go to Moriah and to offer Isaac to God there as a burnt sacrifice. Abraham is called to trust God and obey God in a matter that will cost Abraham dearly. The obvious question is will Abraham trust God and obey him.

### Verse 3

<sup>3</sup> *Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.*

- The very next morning, Abraham set out to go to place where God had told him to go. He takes Isaac and two servants with him and enough wood to offer a burnt offering. It appears that Abraham is prepared to trust God and to obey God.

### Verses 4-8

<sup>4</sup> *On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. <sup>5</sup> He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."*

<sup>6</sup> *Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, <sup>7</sup> Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"*

*"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.*

*"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"*

<sup>8</sup> *Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.*

- It took three days to get to the place where God had told Abraham to go. Abraham left his servants and the donkey some ways off. He put the wood for the sacrifice on Isaac's back. He carried the knife to kill the sacrifice and the torch to ignite the offering. Abraham and Isaac went off alone to offer sacrifice to God.
- On the way to that place, Isaac addressed Abraham. The form of the conversation is very like the conversation God had with Abraham in verse 1. Isaac pointed out that they had all the things essential for the sacrifice except the lamb. He wanted to know where the animal was that they were to sacrifice.
- Abraham's answer to Isaac's question is vague. He tells Isaac that "God will provide the lamb." The tense of the verb is future. God WILL provide the lamb. But if Isaac is the sacrifice, then God has already provided the lamb. Scholars argue that Isaac becomes a picture of what God WILL do. He WILL provide the lamb and that lamb will be His own Son, Jesus Christ. But Abraham cannot know that. Abraham's answer shows that he is trusted God

to provide the answer to the question and to resolve the problem. GOD WILL PROVIDE!

- Isaac's question shows that he is old enough to reason through the circumstances and to see that something is out of order. They are going to offer sacrifice but there is no animal to sacrifice.
- At this point, Abraham is the chief actor in the drama that is unfolding. Isaac is the audience with us. From Abraham's behavior we will learn a lesson about living in God's world.

### Verses 9-12

*<sup>9</sup> When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"*

*"Here I am," he replied.*

*<sup>12</sup> "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."*

- When they arrived at the place of sacrifice, Abraham prepared the altar for the sacrifice. He then bound Isaac and laid him on the altar in the place where the lamb was to be offered. He took the knife he had brought and held it over his son intending to kill Isaac as the sacrifice required of him by God. What must Isaac have thought?
- But then an angel called out to Abraham. Again, the conversation is like the previous two in this chapter. The angel told Abraham not to harm Isaac.
- The angel said that Abraham feared God in that he sought to obey God. He had not even withheld from God that which was most precious to him, his only son.

### Verses 13-14

*<sup>13</sup> Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."*

- In a thicket, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns. He offered that ram as the sacrifice instead of Isaac. Abraham named the place, "YHWH will

provide." That is the first lesson from this text. YHWH WILL PROVIDE! God is worthy of our trust because He is faithful. He will provide the lamb, Jesus Christ!

### **Verses 15-19**

<sup>15</sup> *The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time* <sup>16</sup> *and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,"* <sup>17</sup> *I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,* <sup>18</sup> *and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."*

<sup>19</sup> *Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.*

- Abraham had shown that he would trust God. Because Abraham had resolved to trust God and obey him, God himself rejoiced and renewed His promise to Abraham (see Genesis 12:1-3).
- Then Abraham and Isaac, his son, returned to the servants and went to Beersheba.

### **Verses 20-24**

<sup>20</sup> *Some time later Abraham was told, "Milkah is also a mother; she has borne sons to your brother Nahor: <sup>21</sup> Uz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel (the father of Aram), <sup>22</sup> Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel." <sup>23</sup> Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milkah bore these eight sons to Abraham's brother Nahor. <sup>24</sup> His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also had sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maakah.*

- Time passed. Abraham learned sons were born to his brother Nahor. Abraham's family was bigger than his own household. The third question which the Book of Genesis answers, "How do we get along in God's world God's way, particularly with the members of my own family," begins to emerge.

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