

ABRAHAM . . . who believed God
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(Genesis 22: 5)

"It came to pass that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto 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. And Abraham rose up early in the morning . . . and went unto the place of which God had told him."

The Faith which brought Strength

"Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him" (Gen. 21: 5). When God sent Isaac, domestic difficulties soon upset the tranquillity of the home, and Abraham quickly recognized that two women cannot reign from the same throne. "Sarah said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son." And God said, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (v. 12). Thus Abraham received a double blessing. The Lord gave immediate guidance concerning the domestic arrangements of the troubled home, and also a promise for the continuance of the race. Isaac was but a lad, yet his father knew the boy would marry and beget children, for the Lord had promised that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." When God suggested that the child should be offered as a burnt offering, Abraham probably received the greatest shock of his life; but as he struggled with himself and with his problem. the memory of the promise reassured him. It was not possible for his child to die-and to remain in his grave-until he had become a father.

"Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 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. Abraham knew that if Isaac were slain, the Lord would raise him to life to fulfil the great promise. And if God did not permit the death of the boy, He would reveal a way out of the difficulty.

The Faith which brought a Substitute

"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said . . . Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." Abraham was the man who believed God, and language seems inadequate to express the quality of his faith. Many years later the Lord Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and was glad." What did Abraham see? Should verse eight be printed like this: ". . . And Abraham said, My son, God will provide HIMSELF a lamb for a burnt offering"? If he saw Christ's day and was glad, did he also see that the Word would be made flesh and become the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world?

"And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven

Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him . . . And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns." By his horns. Had the offering been caught by any other part of its body, parts of the fleece would have been left on the thorns, and the offering would not have been perfect in the sight of its Creator.

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The Faith which brought Salvation

And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." The lad was removed from the altar; the ram took his place, and through that ancient act of substitution, one of the earliest Gospel types was presented to the world. As Isaac returned to his home, he realized that an offering had died in his stead. And every day, Abraham watched his son growing on toward manhood. "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing . . . 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 seashore . . . And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:15-18).

Oh, help me then to understand

How great was thy rich grace;

I should have died upon that cross,

But Thou didst take my place.

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