



Walnut Street Church of Christ
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Vertical Limits – Lesson One
A Mount In Moriah
The Way To Sacrifice – Abraham & Isaac
(Genesis 22:1-18)

Theme: Vertical Limits: God both made and used Mountains; we are using some Mountains in our Vacation Bible School during 2013 to gain some great Bible Lessons. God said, “And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.” (Isaiah 49:11) This “Vertical Limit” lesson deals with God’s command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. We will learn about the way of sacrifice as we journey up Mount Nebo with Abraham and Isaac.

We can learn much about sacrifice and worship from Abraham. He lived thousands of years ago and he lived under a different covenant than we live under; he lived under the Patriarchal covenant and we live under the New Covenant. (Hebrews 8-9) There is much to be learned for Christians as we study those things that were written before our New Covenant. Paul wrote, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4) We learn that even though what Abraham was commanded to do in worship was far different than what we are commanded, yet both his worship and our worship had to be in spirit and in truth. “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24)

God put Abraham to a most difficult test. (Genesis 22:1-2) He commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on one of the mountains in Moriah. This deed took tremendous faith. Isaac was the son of promise and now God said sacrifice him. (Genesis 12:1-3) Abraham's heart and mind must have been confused, but his love for God and his determination to serve him never wavered. Abraham knew that God hated human sacrifice. Yet, he did not question God; instead he had enough love for God to simply obey him. In the Book of Hebrews we read, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." (Hebrews 11:17-19) Abraham did not know the complete story, but he knew God. He knew that God would keep His promise, so he concluded that God would raise Isaac from the dead. The three days journey, of about 50 miles to the mountain, gave Abraham a lot of time to think and pray. Abraham, Isaac and the two servants made the journey to the mountain. The servants were left at the base of the mountain; Abraham said he and Isaac would return. His faith was amazing! As they went up the mountain Isaac carried the wood and Abraham carried the fire and the knife. Isaac was bound and placed on the altar before God stopped the sacrifice. God provided a ram for the sacrifice instead of Isaac. He promised Abraham that through his "Seed" (Jesus) salvation would come. (Galatians 3:16) The Hebrew writer wrote of that promise saying, "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Hebrews 6:13-18) From Abraham we learn the way of sacrifice.

Abraham made preparation for the worship and sacrifice. In Genesis 22:1-6 we read, "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. 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. 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. 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. 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.” (Genesis 22:1-6) Abraham rose up early in the morning to offer the sacrifice that God had required. He prepared fire, wood and Isaac and most of all he prepared his own heart for worship and sacrifice. Sadly, many gather for worship in our day with no preparation physically and no preparation of heart for worship. Abraham was serious about doing his best to honor God and please Him.

Abraham wanted Isaac to know for himself how to worship. As they went up the Mountain, “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? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.” (Genesis 22:7-8) Abraham left the 2 young men at the bottom of the Mountain. Likely, he did not want them trying to interfere with his worship. Isaac had already been taught how to worship God; therefore he knew that they needed a lamb for sacrifice. We, too, should teach our children to worship the way God commanded and because God commanded it.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.” “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. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 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. 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. 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. 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, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 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; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22:9-18) Abraham built an altar, put the wood on it and bound Isaac and put him on the altar. He changed nothing; he simply and lovingly obeyed God. God said to Abraham, “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.” (Genesis 22:12) God promised Abraham, “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22:18, Galatians 3:16-18)

Lessons learned and points of interest about Abraham and Isaac: (1) God had promised Abraham that he would make a great nation of him through Isaac. Even in this matter Abraham had to trust God to keep His word. (2) Abraham told his servants that “I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” He believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. (3) On Mount Moriah, where this event took place, is the location where King Solomon later built the first Temple. (4) Today, the Muslim shrine The Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem, stands on the site of the sacrifice of Isaac. (5) Abraham is in God’s “Faith Hall of Fame.” (Hebrews 11) (6) It is likely that this was the same mountain that God's only Son was crucified on, outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem.

Be converted now! To become a Christian you must hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ (Hebrews 11:6), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32) and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16) After baptism, keep your mind and heart focused on Jesus. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

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