

B.C.C. - Before Christmas Christ: The Lamb

Genesis 22

Abraham Tested

¹ Sometime later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ² 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." ³ 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. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ 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." ⁶ 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, ⁷ 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?" ⁸ Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ¹² "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." ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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." ¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

- How does the story above relate so closely to Jesus?

Jesus was the Lamb of God and He was the replacement sacrifice to satisfy our debt. Also in the same way God supplied a lamb as a replacement sacrifice for Isaac, God also supplied Jesus as a replacement sacrifice for us.

Revelation 5:12 In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the **Lamb**, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!"

- The word of God is filled with verses identifying Jesus as the Lamb of God. What does it mean to say Jesus is the Lamb of God?

He is a perfect and acceptable sacrifice to God. Like in the Passover story, the shed blood of the lamb covers over us and saves us from death. It means he was without guilt (white - perfect) and yet went willingly to the slaughter for us.

Isaiah 53(The Message - for Christmas)

⁷⁻⁹ He was beaten, he was tortured,
but he didn't say a word.
Like a lamb taken to be slaughtered
and like a sheep being sheared,
he took it all in silence.
Justice miscarried, and he was led off—
and did anyone really know what was happening?
He died without a thought for his own welfare,
beaten bloody for the sins of my people.
They buried him with the wicked,
threw him in a grave with a rich man,
Even though he'd never hurt a soul
or said one word that wasn't true.

¹⁰Still, it's what God had in mind all along,
to crush him with pain.

The plan was that he give himself as an offering for sin
so that he'd see life come from it—life, life, and more life.
And God's plan will deeply prosper through him.

The Christmas Story, Read Matthew 1:18-25

(Remembering the reason for Jesus' birth)

- From these passages in Isaiah 53 and Matthew 1:21 what was the reason for the birth of Jesus? How many people that are celebrating Christmas around you know and reflect on that reason?

It shows in both Isaiah and Matthew that the purpose of Jesus was to save us from our sins. You have heard the statement, "Jesus is the reason for the season" and that is most certainly true. But to coin another phrase, "salvation is the reason for the season."

- Who do you know that needs to hear the true message of Christmas? Pray that they might hear and receive the real message of Christmas

Pray for the message to reach those who need to know. Continue to direct people in your group toward sharing the message of salvation in Jesus this Christmas.