

Isaac and Jacob

Genesis 22:1: Isaac was the only son of Abraham and Sarah, and as such was a type of the Lord Y'shua (Jesus), in that he willingly offered himself up for sacrifice.

The Lord had sent Abraham to the mount with these words, in v.2,

"Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there, as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

In the Midrash Rabbah chapter 45:7, the Rabbinical commentary on this scripture is as follows "Take now thy son" Abraham then answers which one? I have two sons. God says "Your only son". Abraham says "Both are the only one of his mother." God says "The one whom you love." Abraham says "But I love both." Then God gives the identification "Even Isaac".

The terminology used in "Your only son" takes on the Jewish concept of uniqueness, because of course, Isaac was not his only son, but he was the only son of the 'promised seed'.

The proposed location to which he was sent, Moriah, is the same site on which Solomon built the Temple (2.Chr.3:1.), and Mount Moriah later became Mount Zion.

The two young men taken with Abraham on the journey were, by Rabbinic tradition, Ishmael and Eleazer of Damascus, as well as Isaac. In v.4 it is clear the journey took three days, which was a total of between fifty and sixty miles, and it was on foot.

It is noteworthy in v.5 that Abraham says to the lads "I will go yonder to worship and come back to you." Thus indicating something of the faith of Abraham. His confidence was in his God in that he knew that he would return with Isaac. However, in what did he place this confidence? His confidence came from the fact that in ch.21:12 God had said "In Isaac shall your seed be called," and since Isaac was only a lad, he would have had to marry in order to bring forth the Promised Seed. Hence Abraham believed in God, and God counted it as righteousness. This obligates the Lord to resurrect him back to life.

In v.6 Isaac carries the wood to the place of sacrifice, this is typology of the Risen Christ who carried his cross to Golgotha. In v.7 Isaac asks a question "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham's answer in Hebrew is "Yireh ulo." The reaction in Hebrew has a double meaning, which is "God will provide for himself a lamb" and "God will provide himself the lamb."

In Rabbinical teaching Abraham in preparing each move of his sacrificial ritual ended with saying this prayer, 'O Lord let this be regarded as being done to my son.' When he arrived at the point of putting the knife to Isaac's throat, the boy's spirit left his body. The tradition goes on to say that the ram was one of the animals created on the sixth day, which is just prior to Sabbath, so that it could be the sacrifice in place of Isaac. When the Angel of the Lord shouted the words "Do not lay your hand on the lad", his soul returned to him. This is symbolic, and the first type of resurrection.

Isaac was married and his wife was barren for twenty years. Isaac prayed and the Lord heard him, and in ch.25:23 the Lord told him

"Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body, one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger."

The result of the birth was Jacob and Esau. They were born when Isaac was sixty years old. In discussing these two patriarchs, one thing looms large in general church teaching which is, that Jacob is a continual "supplanter", as his name suggests. -

This is however not in line with what is gleaned from the Biblical account. In chapter 25:27 scripture tells us that "Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field." This is to say that he broke from the family tradition of being a shepherd and looking after the flocks, and in contrast to general church teaching, Esau was the wanderer who chose to work outside the family, and as such he had to provide his own food, that is why he had to hunt for his own food.

It becomes clear that it was Esau who is the rebel, and not Jacob, in fact this theory is sealed by God in Malachi 1:3 "Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated." Also, Hebrews 12:16-17 says of Esau that he was a profane person and sexually immoral.

Genesis 25:27-34: Verse 27 informs us that Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents, just like his fathers Abraham and Isaac. The word 'mild' in the Hebrew is the word 'Tam' and it means perfect, upright, whole, complete, blameless. He was also a quiet man, and so this does not fit in with most peoples' notions of Jacob, for he is often portrayed as being a mummy's boy', however Rebekah his mother, who named him, knew him to be the true seed line. Isaac loved Esau, why? Because he brought him venison, which was a tasty dish in contrast to his endless supply of mutton. So Isaac ignored the choice of God.

In v.30 Esau comes in from the field and says "Let me have some red pottage". However the Hebrew does not use the word 'pottage'. In Hebrew the quotation is "Ha-Adom, Ha-Adom the red", and this means "Let me gulp down some red". That is why he received the name, and the Bible goes on to use it, of Edom, for this means 'the Red'.

The picture we glean here, and is continued in v31 is of Jacob the hard-working son of his father, who is grieved and perplexed at the shameful antics of his older twin brother, who will receive everything in the birthright from his father's estate without doing anything to deserve it. Therefore in v.31, when Esau comes in from the field and asks Jacob to feed him, Jacob, in the only record of this event documented in scripture, supplants him his birthright, and offers to buy it from him (This was a common occurrence in their day, documented from the archaeological findings in the Mana Tablets). Esau was happy to part with his birthright, for his life-style has no place for responsibility.