

"BUT WHERE IS THE LAMB"

TEXT: Genesis 22:7 And 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?

THESIS: To present the most important element in any sacrifice dealing with sin.

INTRO.: A. You all know the story, but have you ever thought about the reality and the details? Look at this haggard father named Abraham as he trudges along the road with his son in tow. He ignores his servants and barely takes his eyes off his son. He is oblivious to the scenery along the way. As they prepare to bed down each night he sits gazing into the camp-fire with a heavy heart. God has asked him to sacrifice his miracle son, Isaac. How can this be?!

He and Sarah have waited so long; how will he ever look her in the eyes again? With tear filled eyes he watches his son as he sleeps under the stars. No sleep comes to his eyes. His heart is breaking.

B. Finally they reach the summit of Mt. Moriah. Isaac looks around and sees *the fire*, and *the wood*, but he asks a searing, searching question his father has been trying to avoid. He asks **"...but where is the lamb?!"**

C. *The question Isaac asks his father Abraham may be the greatest question of all for all mankind.* Mary had that Lamb in her arms & didn't fully comprehend it. Pilate & Herod spoke face-to-face with that Lamb & didn't recognize Him. John the Baptist proclaimed Him as the Lamb and later had doubts. Men today celebrate His birth at Christmas, His death on Good Friday, His resurrection on Easter & every Sunday and still miss Him! **"WHERE IS THE LAMB?!"**

D. All the types, symbols, pictures, stories, visions, dreams, miracles, sacrifices and prophecies seek the answer to this burning question! **"But where is the lamb?"** is the crucial question of mankind, and the answer to that question is just as crucial. It is a matter of life and death for Abraham & Isaac and a question of eternal life and eternal death for every sinner on the planet for all time. In answering that question we must remember that there are *three elements* needed for the sacrifice...

I. BEHOLD THE FIRE...BUT WHERE IS THE LAMB?"

A. The Fire Is Literal:

1. No doubt Abraham is carrying a censer with literal fire burning in it.
2. Literal fire would be needed to consume the sacrifice; Abraham & Isaac knew that.

ILLUS.: Abraham knew this was to be an outdoor "cookout" so he didn't forget the matches! This was to be a barbeque & Isaac was to be the literal roast. Yes the fire was literal.!

(Make no mistake...the fire of hell is not symbolic, it is indeed literal fire! It is literal, tormenting fire! Jesus said the rich man woke up in hell burning & being tormented in literal flames of fire. The liberals can deny it now, but they will know soon enough of its heat. The neos can allegorize it now, but they will find out it is more than a symbol when they see the loved ones they should have warned burning there in a literal lake of fire! It is not simply separation from God forever, it is torment forever!) [Four times Revelation makes mention of this burning abyss...]

Revelation 19:20 *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

Revelation 20:10 *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Revelation 20:14 *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

Revelation 20:15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

B. The Fire Is Symbolic:

1. Fire is symbolic of the holiness of God: **"Our God is a consuming fire."**
2. In some cases this expression of holiness is in the CONDEMNATION of sin with the fire revealing His DISPLEASURE.
 - a. When God destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah he did so with literal fire to condemn the ungodly abomination of homosexuality there.
 - b. When God saw Nadab & Abihu offer strange fire before him fire fell from heave to consume them. (Self-righteousness is **"strange fire"** & will be severely dealt with.)

ILLUS.: Watch out liberal...do-gooder...religionist...philosopher...traditionalist...scientist...educator...good-works crowd...self-righteous hypocrites...if you fool around with "strange fire" you will get burned!

3. In other cases this expression of holiness in the COMMENDATION of righteousness.

- a. On Mt. Carmel God expressed his delight in Elijah's faith & righteousness vindicated him in the eyes of the false prophets by sending literal fire to consume his offering while ignoring theirs.
- b. In Isaiah the prophet stands in the Temple at the time of the evening sacrifice God reveals Himself in His holiness; the prophet falls on his face & cries out "I am a man of unclean lips" and a Seraphim takes a coal off the burning altar & draws it across Isaiah's lips and says "**Thine iniquity is taken away, thy sin is purged.**"

ILLUS.: **Condemnation or commendation** – what makes the difference?! The answer is the presence or absence of sacrificial blood. In Sodom there was no blood. **Condemnation.** With Nadab & Abihu there was strange fire, but no blood. **Condemnation.** On Mt. Carmel there was a blood sacrifice on the altar. **Commendation.** In the Temple with Isaiah it was the time of the evening sacrifice & the blood had run down on those glowing coals. **Commendation.**

The condemnation of God races towards every sinner today apart from the blood of Calvary. The commendation of God races towards every blood washed saint today because the holiness of God and His righteous payment for sin.

II. BEHOLD THE WOOD...BUT WHERE IS THE LAMB?

A. The Wood Is Literal:

1. Though there is much symbolism in the passage, Isaac is no doubt burdened with literal wood. V.6
2. The literal fire would soon kindle a flame on that literal wood.

B. The Wood Is Symbolic:

1. Picture Abraham placing the literal wood on his son's shoulders as he weeps & they climb up together on Mt. Moriah.
2. Now picture the Heavenly Father placing the sin of mankind on His Son's shoulders as they weep together and they climb up Mt. Calvary.

ILLUS.: Notice the similarity of language in Isaiah 53: "**And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all**" and the language in v.6 of Gen. 22 "**And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son.**"

Though Abraham knew that by transferring this burden to his son it would be the very element to separate them. Though the Lord knew that by transferring the burden of sin to His Son it would be the very element to separate them. He would take all the sin of the harlots, the gamblers, murderers, rapists, pornographers, the liars, and the drunkards as well as the sin of the moralist, the humanist, and the Christ rejecting evolutionist, and religionist and place the whole putrid mess on His Son.

Remember in v. 8 it says that "**they went both of them together.**" They shared in the grief of that hour. Remember too that it was not just the Son of God who suffered on Calvary! While He and His Father had gone up Mt. Calvary together, soon the Son would cry out "**My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?**" Do you really believe the Father was not heartbroken that day, when for the first time ever He and His blessed Son were separated?!

BEHOLD THE FIRE – GOD, ABSOLUTELY HOLY!

BEHOLD THE WOOD – MAN, ABSOLUTELY SINFUL!

III. BEHOLD THE LAMB!

A. The Lamb Is Literal:

1. Abraham with tears streaming down his cheeks no doubt said that "**God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.**" v.8
2. And God did just that - as Abraham dramatically raised the knife over his dear son God called out to him & when he turned He saw the sacrificial animal caught in some bushes to offer instead of His Son.

ILLUS.: Abraham was taught a powerful lesson that day, i.e., that an innocent victim must die in place of the guilty. Over the centuries hundreds of thousands of literal and innocent lambs, rams, bullocks, etc. would be slain in place of the guilty sinners who symbolically transferred their guilt to those ignorant beasts.

B. The Lamb Is Symbolic:

1. All those literal lambs were nothing but a picture of the real Lamb of God who would be slain on Calvary for us all.
2. At last Isaac's burning question is answered, and that answer is mankind's only hope.

ILLUS.: Send the call to heaven and ask: "**Where is the Lamb?**" and the angels, and Gabriel, and the seraphim and cherubim would have to remain silent for some four thousand plus years!

But one day not far from where the drama on Mt. Moriah unfolded a rugged prophet named John would declare twice: "**BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD which taketh away the sin of the world!**"

CONCL.: That sacrificial Lamb whose blood ever flows will instantly, efficaciously transform every sinner who will come believing into a saint. He turns the holy fire of God from a condemning agent, into a purging agent and will change Hell into Heaven for him or her!

Look down into the pit and see in Hell the fire and the wood. Call down into the depths and ask "*Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the Lamb?*" And the answer will return "**There is no Lamb here!**"

Look up into the realms of glory and ask: "*Behold the Lamb, but where is the fire and the wood?*" And the answer will resound: "**There is no wood or tormenting fire here!**"

Yes, friend, the only difference is the Lamb and His precious blood!