10. The Offering of Isaac

We read from the Bible (AMP):

Genesis 22:1-19

The Offering of Isaac  
1. Now after these things, God tested [the faith and commitment of] Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.”

2. God said, “Take now your son, your only son [of promise], whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

3. So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and then he got up and went to the place of which God had told him.

4. On the third day [of travel] Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

5. Abraham said to his servants, “Settle down and stay here with the donkey; the young man and I will go over there and worship [God], and we will come back to you.”

6. Then Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on [the shoulders of] Isaac his son, and he took the fire (firepot) in his own hand and the [sacrificial] knife; and the two of them walked on together.

7. And Isaac said to Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Isaac said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

8. Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself a lamb for the burnt offering.” So the two walked on together.  
9. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood, and bound Isaac his son and placed him on the altar, on top of the wood.

10. Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.

11. But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” He answered, “Here I am.”

12. The Lord said, “Do not reach out [with the knife in] your hand against the boy, and do nothing to [harm] him; for now I know that you fear God [with reverence and profound respect], since you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son [of promise].”

13. Then Abraham looked up and glanced around, and behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering (ascending sacrifice) instead of his son.

14. So Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide. And it is said to this day, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be seen and provided.”  
15. The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time

16. and said, “By Myself (on the basis of Who I Am) I have sworn [an oath], declares the Lord, that since you have done this thing and have not withheld [from Me] your son, your only son [of promise], 17. indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the sand on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies [by conquering them].

18. Through your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have heard and obeyed My voice.”

19. So Abraham returned to his servants, and they got up and went with him to Beersheba; and Abraham settled in Beersheba.

One day God puts Abraham to the test. He calls out, "Abraham!

Abraham hears and recognizes God's voice. He answers, "Yes Lord, here I am”.

God says, 'Take your son Isaac, whom you love dearly, and go to the land of Moriah. Sacrifice him there on 1 of the mountains in the place I will show you.'

What a command. Should Abraham sacrifice his son whom he has waited so long for, and whom he loves so much!!!?

He must not have slept much. The next morning, he got up early, saddled his donkey, cut wood for the burnt offering, called 2 servants and his son Isaac, and set out on his journey.

We must understand that there is a difference between tribulation and temptation.

Tribulation comes from God. He is testing you through a trial of faith. How firm is your faith? And do you really trust God? The goal is to strengthen your faith and deepen your relationship with Him.

Temptation comes from the devil. He wants to tempt/lure you to sin.

That is why it is so important that you can distinguish the voice of God from your own voice or that of the devil.

You get to know God's voice all the better if, among other things, you spend more time with Him, if you keep His law ("Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind. And love your fellow man as much as yourself.' Matthew 22:37-40), as your faith deepens, as you confess your sins and as your relationship with Him grows.

Abraham does not know how this will turn out. But Abraham knows God's voice; he knows he is being given this assignment by God.

Three days they must travel to the place of sacrifice. How hard the journey must have been for Abraham. The dearest thing he has… he has to give back to God.

On the third day Abraham says to his servants, "You stay here; me and the boy are going there to worship. When we are finished, we will come back here.

Hebrews 11:18 says that Abraham believed that God could make Isaac alive again.

Therefore, Abraham can say this to his servants in this way.

Yet, how will he be able to carry out this difficult task? Abraham does not know. All he knows is that he must obey God and that God has his best interests at heart.

He thinks about the covenant God made with him and his descendants. Exactly what that looks like and how it will be when he no longer has a son? He puts everything in God's hand.

They leave the servants behind. Now he puts the wood on Isaac's back. Abraham takes the knife and the fire. As they walk a little further, Isaac asks, "Father, we have fire and wood...but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?

Abraham replies, "God Himself will provide a lamb, my son.

So they walk on. When they come to the place God has named they build an altar there. Abraham lays the wood on it and then binds his son on the altar.

As Abraham takes his knife to kill his son, an angel cries out, "Abraham! Abraham! Don't touch the boy, don't hurt him! Now I know you are in deep awe of the Lord. You even wanted to give your only son to Him.'

In heaven, they anxiously watched what Abraham would do. Would he be willing to carry out this almost impossible task? The son he had waited so long for, his very dearest, would he really want to give it to the Lord?

Heaven intervenes: Abraham does not have to sacrifice his son. Looking around, he sees a ram stuck in a bush with its horns. He may sacrifice it instead of his son.

Abraham calls that place: the Lord will provide.

God himself will provide a lamb. That happened centuries later at Calvary. Jesus, the Son of God, the very dearest thing He had, God gave to the world. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice because He Himself was without sin. He carried the cross wood on His back. But He was not spared at the very last. He died. Thus He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins. He conquered death; even death no longer prevailed, because after 3 days He rose from the dead. He is Almighty.

The angel speaks again to Abraham: 'Because you did this and were even willing to give your own son to Me, I will give you a great blessing, says the Lord. Your family will become innumerable. They will overcome their enemies. And because of the blessing that is on your son, all the people of the earth will be blessed because you obeyed Me.'

What a rich blessing.

God had seen how much Abraham loved Him.

Abraham and Isaac walk back together to the servants. Blessed, they travel home again.

***Prayer: Lord, when trials come our way, will You help us and give us the strength how to deal with them? Give Lord that our faith is sincere and strong. Because we love You.***

***And when temptation comes our way, will You make us strong not to give in to it? So that we remain steadfast?***

***What an example Abraham is for us in this history. Lord, he did not have to sacrifice his son, but Your Son had to die on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Thank You Lord Jesus for this great sacrifice You gave. You gave Yourself. So that our sins no longer stand between us and You. The way is cleared, we may come to You with boldness. Hallelujah, thank You Lord.***

Questions:

- Abraham had to (return) to God the very dearest thing he had. This was an (almost) impossible task. How was he able to do this anyway?

- What is the most precious thing you have?

- A sacrifice always costs you something. If you would give something you no longer want anyway, it is not a sacrifice. Is there something you have to sacrifice/give to the Lord that you find painful to let go of?

- How can you tell the difference between a temptation and a trial in your life?

- This Bible study is about trust. Can you trust God? Why yes/why not? (If not, what needs to change so you can trust God?)

- Faith is not just "in your mind”. In this Bible story, we see that faith becomes "complete" through "deeds. What deeds in your life show that you believe?

This Bible study was written by Carla Heuvelman and can be found on www.febebijbelstudies.nl