



Light of Messiah Ministries

...Bringing Jesus to the Jewish People

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Abraham's Faith and the Binding of Isaac

The shofar will be blown in the synagogue this year on September 8th beginning the Festival of Trumpets.

Synagogues will be filled with Jewish people there to hear the sound of the ram's horn as the festival begins the Jewish New Year. The haunting sound also heralds the beginning of the ten Days of Awe, Yomim Nora'im, the ten days of repentance between the Festival of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. **During this time religious Jewish people are intensely focused on the spiritual and on their need to repent of their sins. They ask forgiveness both from their fellowman and from God.**

On Rosh Hashanah, in the synagogue, the rabbi chants from the Torah. **He recounts the story from Genesis 22; the story of Abraham binding Isaac to the altar.** It is called the Akedah, which means "The Binding". As Abraham raised his hand to slay his beloved son and angel caught his arm and said "Do not harm your son." **There in the thicket was a ram, caught, ready to be sacrificed.**

During the Festival of Trumpets Jewish people remember the faithfulness of God for providing a sacrifice in place of Isaac. **The ram's horn is blown as a call to enter the season of repentance as well as to remember God's faithfulness to Abraham.** Though God asked him to do the most difficult thing imaginable to his son, God provided. **God was faithful to Abraham.**

Abraham was also faithful to God. Abraham's faith was deeply tested. How must Abraham have felt when God asked him to sacrifice Isaac? Isaac was the son that God promised to him.



Isaac was his pride and joy. Isaac was the son to whom Sarah gave birth in her old age. Abraham knew God had a great plan for Isaac. His heart raced.

As they struggled up Mt. Moriah together, what must have been going through Abrahams mind? How could God ask me to do this? Why is God doing this to me? Can I really do it? Will I follow through with it? Can I really kill my son?

On Rosh Hashanah my people read the story. "Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, 'Father?' 'Yes my son?'" Abraham replied. "The fire and the wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. Gen. 22:7-8

Abraham is considered the father of faith in God, the one true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham exercised his faith. Abraham is an example to all of us of faith. **But he is not only an example of faith, he is an example of the outcome of faith.**

Abraham Believed God

Prior to his experience with Isaac on Mt. Moriah Abraham had several encounters with God. In Genesis Chapter 15 the word of the Lord came to Abram (before his name change in chapter 17:5) and promised to be his shield and to be his great reward. He promised him land and descendants through his wife Sarai. Abraham believed God. **His was not an intellectual belief, but a belief rooted in understand and knowing the reality of God as a person; God who is relational, God who is involved, God who makes promises, God who cares.**

An ancient rabbinical story goes like this: Abraham's father was an idol maker. Abraham, after encountering God went into his fathers idol shop and smashed all but one of the idols with a club. He then put the club in the hand of the one undestroyed idol. Abraham's father, upon hearing the commotion in his shop ran in and said to Abraham, "What have you done my son, you have destroyed all of my idols!" Abraham answered, "Father, I did not destroy your idols, that big idol smashed the others," he said pointing to the idol with the club in its hand. His father screamed, "An idol cannot do that." Abraham replied, "So father, why do you believe in them?"

Believing in God is the first step. Abraham recognized the fact that God is reality. The ultimate reality. God visited Abraham personally in Genesis 18. The Lord Himself was one of the visitors who told Abraham of the birth of Isaac. The son of promise. Sarah laughed. She was skeptical. **But Abraham believed God.**

He believed God and the scriptures said it was "reckoned to him as righteousness". **Abraham's belief was such that it translated into faith, which then translated into his life being right in the eyes of God.** So, we know that Abraham's belief was not just intellectual, it was belief rooted in the reality of a relationship with God. That belief flowed into action.

Abraham Obeyed God

It is easy to believe in God. Many believe in God. The scriptures say that the demons believe...yet they shudder. **Belief is one thing. Belief that matures into relationship is another. The next step in the journey is obedience.** This is where we find Abraham in Genesis 20. They read the account in the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah.

God kept His promises to Abraham and also to Sarah. In their old age they bore a son. Not just old age, but very old age. Abraham and Sarah were in their late 90's when Isaac was born. It was a joyous occasion. It was a time of celebration. It was an event to praise God! And so they did. And they lived. And they loved. And Isaac grew.

Abraham's belief, matured into faith, and then matured into obedience. Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. **Abraham obeyed God.** He did not know what they outcome would be. **But he knew that if God asked him to do it, that he was compelled to listen and obey.**

To our knowledge Abraham never asked any questions. He never complained. He never gave excuses. When asked by God to sacrifice his son, he gathered the wood, took his son, and headed for the mountain. At the foot of the mountain, as he left his servants to be alone with Isaac. He told his servants to wait for him there, "*We will worship and then we will come back,*" he said. **Abraham saw the act of sacrificing his son as an act of worship to God!** And, at the same time maybe he hoped, maybe he knew, they would come back together.



God was merciful. He provided the sacrifice. Abraham could truly praise the Lord!

Abraham Praised God

I can only begin to imagine the joy and thankfulness in Abraham's heart as he worshipped God with his son. His son was spared. Out of Abraham's belief, faith, and obedience, came praise and blessing.

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."
Genesis 22:15-18

When we believe God, have faith in God, and obey God, we have every reason to praise God!

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As we walk through life we always must remember Abraham as an example. **Oftentimes God will call us to do things that are way out of our personal comfort zones.** Sharing our faith is one of those areas. Some would rather their right arm be cut off than to have to talk to a friend, or let alone a stranger, about Jesus. Especially a Jewish friend. **Maybe God is calling you to be like Abraham in areas of your life.** Believe Him, obey Him, and praise Him!

Don't forget to pray for Jewish people during this special season of they year as they celebrate the High Holy Days. Pray that as they ask God for forgiveness and read the story of Abraham and Isaac, they will open their hearts to the truth of Jesus, who is the true Sacrifice that God has provided.

2010/2011 Messianic Calendars

Please use the enclosed order form or visit our web site to order your 2010/2011 messianic Jewish calendars. They are a great way to remember to pray for the Jewish people.

Thank You!

We have many wonderful God given opportunities to see Jewish lives being changed by the message of Messiah Jesus this summer.

Thank you for loving the Jewish people. Thank you for praying. Thank you for standing with us to bring Jesus back to the Jewish community.

Your prayers and financial support make what we do possible.

In the service of the King,

Murray Tilles...for the staff
Light of Messiah Ministries