

## ADVENT WEDNESDAY 2 – 2007

### Genesis 22: 1 - 5

Advent is a time to focus on preparation, getting ready. Advent means 'Coming'. It is always the coming of Jesus Christ that we refer to. Be ready for Jesus' coming.

God got the people of the Old Testament ready for the coming of the Savior into this world through His revelation. Especially from the time of Moses onward, God did His revealing through the Prophets. Moses wrote Genesis. Both last week and today it is revelation God gave us through Moses that we focus on. May these verses assist us in our preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. And may these words of God enable us to be ready for the Day of Jesus' coming again.

### Faith In God's Promises Is the Ultimate Preparation.

God made surprising promises to Abraham. God promised Abraham personal blessings and that Abraham's name would be famous. Four thousand years later an awful lot of people know his name, don't they? God promised that He would turn this old and childless couple into a nation. God accomplished that through Isaac. God promised Abraham that through one future descendant of the family God would bless all the nations of the earth.

For an old couple, far away from home, strangers in a strange land, and childless, those were quite some promises. Had it been anyone else but God giving those promises there would surely have been little reason to believe them. But it was God who made them.

Because almighty God, the Holy One, did make these promises, Abraham believed them. He was sure that God was perfectly capable of doing what He said, and would, in fact, do it.

And though another quarter of a century went by during which the old couple got older, God one day made the promise very specific – a year from now Sarah will have a son. She did, Isaac.

Around fifteen years went by after Isaac's birth. That is when this happened.

You and I are Abraham's children, His spiritual children. God says so, "It is NOT the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's children." But who are the 'children of promise'? To the Galatians Paul wrote, "You, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise."

We are the full-fledged children of God because of Jesus. God promises us that as God's children we will inherit eternal life by faith in Jesus, His one and only, dearly loved Son. To the world we are nothing. In this world we are dying. But because God makes these promises, believe them.

God said to Abraham, "Go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice your one and only son whom you dearly love, Isaac, to Me there. I will show you the specified spot when you get there."

So, what happened? Abraham had believed the promise about Isaac. God gave them Isaac just as He had promised. Now God seemed to be going back on His promise in a most shocking way. What would Abraham do?

Abraham got to it immediately! Early the next morning Abraham got up, saddled a donkey, took along two servants, wood sufficient for the sacrifice, a fire box to start the fire,

a knife, and Isaac. That is what he did! And they traveled three straight days until they got near Moriah. From there Abraham and Isaac went on alone, taking along the wood, which Isaac carried, the fire and the knife. And, as Abraham said, they headed off to worship.

Abraham did not burden or tempt the two servants with the details of that worship. Their faith might not have been where Abraham's was. Until Abraham tied up Isaac, Abraham did not burden Isaac with the details either. But there is no indication that the fifteen year old tried to overpower or escape his one hundred-fifteen year old father.

How could Abraham do this? He believed God's promise. But what God now commanded Abraham seemed to contradict that promise! 'Seemed'? Seemed that way to what? To human reason, to human logic? But our thinking is little! And it has been terribly weakened by sin! God is holy. God is almighty. We must focus not on our thinking but on God's Word.

Abraham was not lying or being even deceptive when he told his servants that after he and Isaac worshipped they would return and go back home. God clearly reveals (shows) us exactly what Abraham's faith in God made him think. "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead." That kind of reasoning is possible only by faith in God's truth. And, for believers in Jesus, that is how we are to reason, to think.

We are sorely tempted often to worship the false god called 'God, but...'. Oh, I believe in God, but..., or I believe God's Word but... All sentences that start like that show thinking controlled by sin, not by faith. When you hear yourself thinking, 'God but...' or 'God's Word but...', stop right there. Sin is taking over, unbelief is winning. Let it be God and His Word, period!

Abraham's obedience was a fruit of his faith in God's Word. And it led to another wondrous revelation about that promised Child of Abraham born two thousand years later, two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ.

There is something wrong with much of the Christmas preparation going on. You sense it. The problem is the world fails to believe whose birth we celebrate. It is not just baby Jesus. It is the Savior, God's one and only Son, whom He dearly loves. 'Savior' puts the cross in the front. "A Savior has been born to you!"

God emphasized that Isaac was a one and only, dearly loved son. God told Abraham to give his son to death. God told him to go to Moriah to do it and God picked the exact spot. Listen to Second Chronicles 3:1, "Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah." That is where the blood was sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant to make atonement for the sins of the people. That is where the curtain ripped from top to bottom at the moment Jesus died on His cross a few hundred feet away.

Years ago a children's Christmas service called 'The Cross in the Christmas Tree' was written. It has always been a favorite of mine. It made the point so graphically, clearly!

In your preparations for Christmas and for Jesus' coming again, keep your faith centered on the cross of Christ. Then you will be ready for Christmas and for the Last Day. Amen.