

Hidden in Plain Sight: Isaac's Sacrifice

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Grab a Bible

You'll need that in a little bit

And turn to Genesis 22

We've titled this series

Hidden in Plain Sight

The idea

Is that God arranged things

Years before Jesus

Centuries before Jesus

Knowing that Jesus was coming

And just like a good author

They drop hints in at the beginning of the book

Or the beginning of the movie

That set up the aha moment

The Holy Spirit arranged things in the Old Testament

And Jesus, then, is the aha moment

That could have been the title

"Jesus is the aha moment"

You see an example of this in John 5:

Look at this interaction

Between Jesus and the Pharisees

John 5:39a - You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life.

The only Scriptures they had

When Jesus walked the earth

Was the Old Testament

Right?

So, He's saying you study the Old Testament

But...

These are the very Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life. {John 5:39-40}

The whole Bible points to Jesus

He was there all along

But they didn't recognize it

He's here now

But we still don't always recognize Him

He's hidden in plain sight

Let's be clear:

The Holy Spirit inspired prophets to speak

Words that Jesus fulfilled

That's prophecy

The Holy Spirit inspired authors to write

Actions that Jesus fulfilled

That's more prophecy

But the Holy Spirit also inspired

People to action

That mimicked Jesus

Before He was here

That's called Typology

You may be skeptical of some of this

That's ok

If there were 1 or 2 items

Maybe

But this is overwhelming

And I hope to convince you of that today

In keeping with the topic of foreshadowing

I want to give you all the takeaways today

At the *beginning* of the message

So, you know where we're going

And then, *at the end*

Hopefully, I will have foreshadowed correctly

If so

That's not prophecy or typology

That's just the grace of God

Or... possibly... dumb luck

I am hoping to convince you

Of three key realities today:

1 - God is smarter than you are {Brilliant}

Simply put

God is playing chess

And we're...

We're not even playing checkers

We're making mud pies

God is smarter than we are

I'm going to show you that today

2 - God is a master administrator {Leader}

Look at this quote:

Trust in large institutions is declining all across the board. People are increasingly losing their faith in large institutions in an age of mass information, "fake news," out-of-touch politicians, #MeToo, income inequality, conspiracy theories, public health crises, and absurd political

theater. The four primary institutional pillars of modern society – Government, Business, Media, and Church – are more likely to be viewed as corrupt, ineffective, and self-serving than trustworthy, effective, and selfless. – Joe Terrell

Cynicism in institutional pillars

Is skyrocketing

And surveys show that that cynicism

Is higher the younger you go

The baby boomers & builders among us

Probably have a lower view than they used to

But they still have more trust

Than Gen-x'ers and Millennials ever had

Gen-Z is pretty sure that large organizations

Can't be trusted to organize a 2-car parade

It's into that context

That we have the Living God

Organizing events and words and actions

Hundreds of years before Jesus

So that when Jesus arrives

You realize who He is

And you realize that

God's got this

He's a master administrator

And He's smarter than we are

3 – God can be trusted {Trustworthy}

Consider the worries that plague us:

Am I a good parent?

Is the economy stable?

Will our country ever come together?

Will I ever meet Mr. Right?

Am I saving enough for retirement?

Is Covid coming back?

Is my marriage going to make it?

If any of these are worries you have

Know that God is more trustworthy than you are

There is so much of life

That is out of our control

But nothing is out of His control

He can be trusted

OK – so we’re just going to put those up there

And jump into our story

Genesis 22

Introduce Abraham

1 Some time later God *tested* Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.

So, God prompted this

It says He tested Abraham

As you’ll see

God indeed set this up

About 2000 years before Jesus

As one of the hints He was dropping

As part of His story

As part of history

In fact, think of it this way

We don’t know exactly what year this happened

But if you place Abraham on a timeline

With us

The life of Jesus is about half-way

We're about as many years after Jesus
As Abraham was before
And God was dropping *significant* hints
Significant
To point us towards Jesus

2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

So, here's the first hint
God says your:

"only son"

But Isaac's not really Abraham's only son
He also has Ishmael

So, what's happening?

Well, maybe He's referring to?
The only son of the promise
Ishmael wasn't the promised son
But many scholars think
This was a little hint
An Easter egg

That God dropped for His people to find

Because a couple thousand years later

He would say

At Jesus' baptism

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment Heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from Heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased." – Matthew 3:16-17

So, if you ever hear these words from Heaven

In the James Earl Jones octave

You're gonna notice

But if you're a devout Jew

And you hear these words

You might just go

Now wait a minute

His "only son" ...

Interesting

The next one

This is one of my favorites

God tells Abraham to go to a mountain

In the region of Moriah

Where's that?

All kinds of things happened there

In 2 Samuel 24

God's people were under a curse

And David went to build an alter

To try to stop the curse

And he bought a **threshing floor** from a guy named **Araunah**

He built an alter with the wood from his threshing floor

And he offered a sacrifice to stop the curse

Where was Araunah's threshing floor?

On top of Mt. Moriah

The same place that

Abraham *almost* sacrificed Isaac

Then later

When God told **Solomon** to build a **temple**

Where did they go?

Back to Mt. Moriah

For nearly 1,000 years

Solomon's temple

And then Herod's temple after that

At this very sight

Received sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice

No matter how many sacrifices were offered year after year, they never added up to a complete solution. – Hebrews 10:1b (MSG)

You've seen Mt. Moriah, by the way

The location of Araunah's threshing floor

Do you know what's there now?

Right here {Show The Dome of the Rock}

Isn't it interesting that God predicted

Isaac & Ishmael's kids would fight

And all these years later

Almost 4000 years later

The most contested piece of real estate in the world

Is where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac

Both Isaac's kids – the Jews

And Ishmael's kids – the Arabs

See this spot as part

Of *their* heritage

Sin matters

Abraham goes outside of God's plan

And much of the world is still paying a price

Fast forward a few more years

And Jesus climbed a mountain

In the region of Moriah

To a specific ridge of that mountain

Called Golgotha

God offered up His Son

Near the very place

That Abraham offered up his

3Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

There's a couple here:

He rides into Moriah

Modern day Jerusalem

On a donkey

Interesting

We just celebrated

Two weeks ago

Jesus riding into Jerusalem

On a donkey

Another one:

He is lead up to the mountain

With **two guys** at his side

By itself, that's just ironic

But when you stack it with the rest

That's crazy to me

This is 1000's of years beforehand

My favorite though

Abraham was in Beersheba

Three days south of Moriah

God said go sacrifice your son

So, for 3 days – they walked along

With Abraham going over in his mind

What's that going to be like?

Will I be able to go through with it?

Why in the world is God asking this of me?

What's his momma going to say when I get home without him?

For three days, it was like Isaac was already dead

But then Abraham says

We'll worship – and then we'll return together

Did he anticipate God stopping him?

Did he anticipate God raising Isaac from the dead?

We don't know

But that dude's faithful

6Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

Am I the only one who thinks this is cool?

Isaac **carried** the **wood** upon which he was going to die **on his back** up the mountain

Just like Jesus did

Up that same mountain

A few centuries later

If this was a fictional story

That would be clever

But no one disputes this really happened

Jewish rabbi's

Who don't think Jesus was the Messiah

Agree that all this happened

In the same place

If you're not a Christian

You've got to wrestle with
All these coincidences

This is also an important point about Isaac

How old do you think Isaac is?

Lots of us were taught

He was a little boy

Right?

I got these pictures online

From kids' curriculum

But that doesn't make sense from the story

Abraham brought enough firewood

To build an altar

He had enough stuff

That he & Isaac needed

Two servants and a donkey to carry it

And he piled all of that on Isaac

To walk up the mountain

That's not a little boy

Many rabbinic traditions estimate that Isaac was in his late 20's or early 30's

Some rabbinic traditions state that he was 37 years old

Which if that's true

Sarah – his mom – died when he was 37

The New Encyclopedia of Judaism actually says that Sarah's death

Was tied to the stress

Over losing Isaac

As the two of them went on together, 7Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

8Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

"God Himself will provide"

In the book of Hebrews

The author describes priests

Offering sacrifices for the people

In the Most Holy Place

And it says, in chapter 9

He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. – Hebrews 9:12

God... Himself... provided

9When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

If you have a grown man tossing a little kid on the altar

That makes sense

But if you have a 137-year-old man

And a 37-year-old man

Abraham didn't "*place him*" on the altar

Isaac crawled up on the altar himself

John 10:17b-18a - I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

10Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

12"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

This wasn't a child sacrifice

And a sadistic parent

But two grown men

Crying at just how hard it is to follow God

In this moment

I do think God prompted Abraham

So that his life told a story

That would grab everyone's attention

Any good story causes you to put yourself in it

Could I go through with that?

Would I be faithful all the way to the end?

For Abraham – could I do that if God asked me?

And for Isaac – could I submit to that if God said?

And it *screams* of Jesus

Matthew 26:50b-53 - Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested Him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

Abraham was faithful

All the way to the end

I'm not sure I could have been

Isaac was faithful

All the way to the end

I'm not sure I could have been

And all of that

Draws our attention to God

Who did not lash out

When they spat on His Son

When they pulled out chunks of beard

When they nailed Him to a cross

All of it draws our attention to Jesus

Who turned the other cheek

When they slapped Him again and again

Jesus didn't retaliate

When they whipped Him

Jesus didn't tap out

When He was struggling to catch His next breath

13Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

14So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

Ahh, this is cool

Abraham prophesied that God would provide

And He did

And it was all intentional

So, the Jewish would recognize Jesus

So that we would recognize Jesus now

A ram

A male lamb

Was caught in a thicket of thorns

Thorns being one of the clearest representations

Of the curse in the garden

And the ram was caught

With thorns on his head

Foreshadowing the mockery

That Jesus would endure

And all of that must've struck a chord

When Jesus was introduced to the world

Do you remember how He was announced?

**John 1:29 - The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said,
"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

Look at verse 14 again

On the mountain of the Lord

God provided a lamb

That's powerful

OK, one more...

15The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from Heaven a second time 16and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17I 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, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Just as God wanted to bless the whole world {Bless all}

Through Abraham

And through Abraham’s descendants

God wants to bless the whole world

Through Jesus

And through Jesus’ descendants

His followers

That’s us

Look at this passage

Galatians 3:8b-9 (NLT) - The Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in His sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, “All nations will be blessed through you.”

God was working in Abraham’s life

And He was thinking about Jesus

He was thinking about us

We’re playing checkers

And God’s playing chess, friends

He's at a whole different level

This passage continues:

So, all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

God spent 2,000 years before Jesus came

Preparing the world for His arrival

And He's spent 2,000 years since He came

Pleading with us for our attention

Jesus told us we wouldn't know the date

So, I'm not claiming anything like that

But He also told us to pay attention to the signs

And it would be just like Him

To have as much time

Between Abraham and Jesus

As He's allowed between Jesus and the end

And we don't know exactly when that is

But it's about now

God spent 2,000 years before Jesus came
 Preparing the world for His arrival
And He's spent 2,000 years since He came
 Pleading with us for our attention

Does He have yours?

I want to invite you
 Plead with you
To put your faith in Jesus Christ

He is the aha moment
 In every story
He's been there all along
 Hidden in plain sight

God is brilliant

A leader you can follow

Who is always trustworthy

Put your faith in Him