



Intro: Happy Advent season! I love every time of year with different aspects of each season having meaning for me. One of my favorite parts to this time of year is hearing stories. With the earlier darkness and the need to stay inside more, children are more apt to sit down to listen to a story. I just finished reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to my daughters last night. I love getting to tell stories and listening to good stories. I still remember when I was a child hearing Elden Brunet in his Southwest LA Cajun accent read *The Cajun Night Before Christmas*. If you've never heard the cajun version, I recommend that you look it up on YouTube to hear the south Louisiana twist to the story.

Of course, fantastic, grand stories resonate with us, especially as they point us back to the True Story of God and Man, the story about the Creator who loved His creation and had set a plan in place to redeem it for His glory and our good, even though mankind rebelled, wrecking the created order. It is The Story of a King who would step down from His throne to give His life for peasants and rabble who then become members of the royal family. It is The story of God's great gift of love poured out on His people.

In a previous advent season, I preached on Genesis 3 and how God proclaimed judgment upon His creation. We were made for flourishing in God's presence without any suffering, without any hatred, without any wars or lies or betrayals, but we sinned. We dishonored the Creator and incurred the promise of death for our disobedience. Sin did not just make us able to die physically. Sin entered into us, killing us on the inside, separating us from God.

At that time, God also promised to bring about a seed of woman, One who would crush the head of the serpent, though his heel would be bruised. A later male descendant from woman would undo all the evil that the serpent had brought about by his lies. A later head of humanity would bring about righteousness in place of the wickedness that Adam brought into our story.

In preparing to accomplish this task, God wanted us to know how He would bring about this Savior, giving us a typological pattern for how to expect him, and narrowing our focus on the lineage by which the Promised Seed would come.

**22:1 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!”
“Here I am,” he answered.**

2 “Take your son,” he said, “your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”

3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about.

4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we’ll come back to you.”

6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together.

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father.” And he replied, “Here I am, my son.”

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

**8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”
Then the two of them walked on together.**

9 When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood.

10 Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

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

12 Then he said, “Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me.”

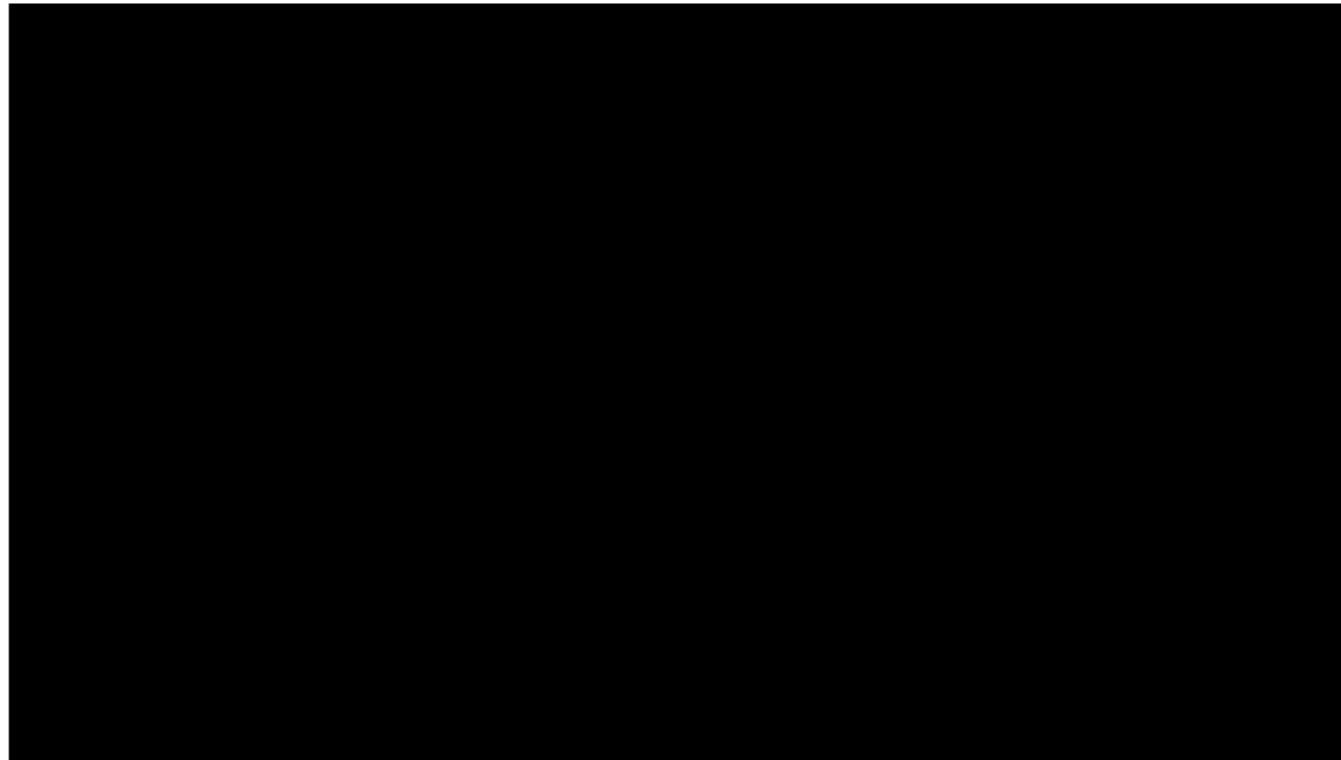
**13 Abraham looked up and saw
a ram caught in the thicket by
its horns. So Abraham went and
took the ram and offered it as a
burnt offering in place of his
son.**

14 And Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide, so today it is said, “It will be provided on the Lord’s mountain.”

**15 Then the angel of the Lord
called to Abraham a second
time from heaven 16 and said,
“By myself I have sworn,” this is
the Lord’s declaration:**

“Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore.

**Your offspring will possess the
city gates of their enemies. 18
And all the nations of the earth
will be blessed by your offspring
because you have obeyed my
command.”**



Tests are revealing. Some of you or your family members have taken final exams over the past month, revealing how well the student knows the material covered in the class. Today as we begin our advent series of sermons, we look at a test that revealed a need you did not know you had.

By this test, God revealed at least three things.

First, God revealed that He alone can bring about the salvation and blessing for all nations.

Second, God revealed a pattern to give us conceptual structures to understand the sacrifice of the greater Promised Son.

Third, God revealed that He would bring about His blessing to all nations by means of a Faithful Son in the line of Abraham.

For some of you this may be the first time you are hearing this passage of Scripture. For others, it may have been some years since you last heard it. No matter how many times you read it, the narrative is gripping. The first verse gives you information that Abraham did not have in order to help prepare you for what is about to happen. As you listen to this part of God's grand story, you should have several questions come up. How could God ask Abraham to sacrifice his son? Doesn't God abhor human sacrifice? Why does refer to Isaac as Abraham's only son? Didn't he have Ishmael? And Abraham sent Isahmael off? If he loses Isaac, then this whole story is just a tragedy for him? Is he really going to do it, sacrifice his son?

There is a moment in the movie Princess Bride that the grandfather says, "The eels don't eat her." "What?" replies the grandson. "The eels don't actually eat her. You were looking nervous, so I wanted you to know." In the recording of this story, Moses does something similar. God doesn't actually want Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This is a test. So before we ever get into the hair raising, heart stopping drama of the story, we are alerted to God's motives. This is a test to reveal how God is going to bring about the Promised Son that the world was to anticipate.

God revealed that He alone can bring about the salvation and blessing for all nations.

First, God revealed that He alone can bring about the salvation and blessing for all nations.

God had called Abram to leave the land he knew and to walk before him, promising to bless all nations through him. Later he made a covenant with Abram, promising to make his descendants as numerous as the stars. After that, God renamed him Abraham, promising that he would bring about many nations through him. Then he promised that he would bring a son to Abraham by means of Sarah, even though they were both in old age. In chap. 21, Isaac was born. Sarah saw that Ishmael, the son of the servant that Sarah had offered to Abraham in her place, this other son was mocking Isaac. You don't mess with a mama's child, especially her newborn. She told her husband to send that other child away. That was obviously upsetting to Abraham, but then God spoke. First, he made clear that He was going to take care of Ishmael's needs and bless him with many descendants because he was Abraham's biological child. But God also said to listen to Sarah, because this child Isaac was the promised child through whose lineage God would bless all nations.

Now, let's revisit our text. 2 "Take your son," he said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

In the past, Abraham had to be reassured of God's plan and faithfulness. He had even fallen into the temptation of thinking that he would have to do God's part of fulfilling his plan, which is how his relationship with Hagar came about. But how does Abraham respond now?

5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we'll come back to you."

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, "My father."

And he replied, "Here I am, my son."

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

8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Then the two of them walked on together.

Abraham trusted God to keep His promise. His words are not empty lies to his servants. Abraham had learned to trust God. If God had promised to bring about His promise to bless all nations through Isaac, then God would deliver Isaac from the sacrificial altar.

Only God could bring about His promise to bless all nations. You were made for flourishing. You were made for joy. Have you lived long enough to recognize the truth that we ruin the creation when we try to take control of everything and try to make our lives all about us apart from God's Word? You were made to know God, bringing Him glory forever as you enjoy Him and all that He has designed for you. But only God can restore you to relationship with Himself. Your part is to place your faith in Christ, the Promised Son, that God brought about. In His timing, God brought about the Savior of the World, the Promised Son and Faithful Servant, born of Woman, born of a Virgin, who would suffer and die in our place. Only God could bring about Christmas, our hope in a dark world.

God revealed a pattern to have us look forward to the greater Promised Son.

Second, God revealed a pattern to give us conceptual structures to understand the sacrifice of the greater Promised Son.

This test for Abraham revealed what the Great Teacher wanted us to know to prepare us for the Promised Son. When a good teacher gives a final exam, he or she gives for the good of the students. By having them prepare for the test, they are affirmed in their understanding of the subject. The teacher makes sure that they show competency in the matters that are most important and pertinent to the subject so that they can excel in applying this knowledge afterward.

We are privileged to look in upon Abraham's test and learn from his experience. This test seems out of the blue and beyond compare within Israel's history, beyond compare except for one. This test known as the binding of Isaac gave us conceptual patterns so that we should not be shocked when Jesus arrived and suffered and died in our place. Such a pattern as this in the OT that points forward to the fulfillment of Christ Jesus is called typology. Typology is discerning patterns of how God relates within former times to help us see how God will interact in the future.

I'm letting you know now that we have to be very careful with asserting parts of the OT as typological patterns. It is much safer to do so when you have NT authors clearly depicting OT people, structures, or events as types that prepare us for Jesus. Because Scripture's authors wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can trust them more than our best attempts to discern. Thankfully, the NT looks back at this event and the situation surrounding it as part of the patterns anticipating how God would bring about the Promised Son and the salvation of the world.

Isaac was declared to be the one and only son because he was the son of promise. God promised to bring him into the story through a mother who should not have been able to give birth. Jesus is the True One and Only Son, very God of very God, born of a virgin, who should never have been able to give birth, but nothing is impossible with God.

Abraham foretells that he and the son will go on a journey to make a sacrifice and that the son would come back alive. 1 Corinthians tells us that the core of the gospel

message is that Jesus died on behalf of sins according the Scriptures, was buried, and raised again on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Isaac asks, "Where is the lamb for sacrifice?" Abraham responds that God will provide the lamb for sacrifice. Jesus is declared by John the Baptist to be the Lamb of God. In the latter part of Luke 2, Jesus is about the same age as Isaac was in Genesis 22. It was Passover when Jesus visited Jerusalem with his family. He knew He was to be in His Father's house, obeying what His Father had planned for Him, as he hears and sees a Passover lamb being sacrificed for his family, a sacrifice that anticipated his sacrifice for the sins of the world, for the sins of his people from all nations.

Abraham in Genesis 22 is asked to sacrifice his son, but the angel of the Lord speaks to stop Abraham from sacrificing his son. This angel of the Lord is both recognized as YHWH himself and yet is a messenger of YHWH. The preincarnate Son of God says, "Stop!" That type of sacrifice is only for me to go through one day.

Abraham was confident in the Lord's provision of a lamb, but God did not deliver up an infant sheep. He delivered to Abraham a full-grown male lamb, a ram, whose head was encircled by thorns, the thorns that resulted from the fall and judgment, the symbol of the curse that would also be placed upon the head of Christ our Lord. And so that mountain became a marker of God's provision, pointing forward to another elevated place on which God would provide a substitute for you and me.

This advent season, remember that you are in God's story. Let your heart be prepared for celebrating the plan that God has brought about to redeem you by means of the Promised Son, the Son we did not realize we needed.

God's blessing for all nations was the Faithful Son in the line of Abraham.

Third, God revealed that He would bring about His blessing to all nations by means of a Faithful Son in the line of Abraham. The promise of a savior begins to have a narrower focus. This Son would not just be of a woman, but would be a direct descendant of Abraham through Isaac

15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn," this is the Lord's declaration: "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command."

Yes, only God could accomplish His plan and mission. But there had to be a faithful mediator to undergo this trial, this test. And God declared that the blessing for all nations would be funneled through the faithfulness of Abraham. According to the line and type of Abraham, the blessing to all nations would come through Jesus's faithfulness. Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness, but Abraham also showed his faith through active obedience.

Through him came the Messiah, whose faithfulness and obedience makes the way for us to have life by faith.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. 14 The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Like Isaac, Jesus the Son submitted to the Father saying, "Not my will but yours be done." Like Abraham, he obeyed God in the ultimate test, but Jesus completed the

sacrifice that was reserved for Him alone, securing our victory and the healing of the nations.

This Advent season may you and your family celebrate Christmas according to the context of God's story. It is a great time to let your heart be reminded of all the centuries that God prepared the world for the promised Savior. It is a time to mourn the pride of man that led us to miss the Savior who came so humbly. It is a season to return our hearts to the grand story of God's mission to rescue and save His lost children and make all the bad things become untrue. Are you preparing yourself, your family, and your friends for celebrating Christ's coming as the Promised Son?