

Abraham and Isaac - Seven Prophetic Samples

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A Recent Prophetic Sample

From time to time, God graciously gives mankind prophetic samples of things to come. For example, a few weeks ago on July 19, an unexpected asteroid impacted Jupiter. The crash created an impact crater approximately 6,000 miles wide! Fifteen years earlier, a comet, named Shoemaker-Levy 9, broke apart and impacted Jupiter.

Shoemaker-Levy 9 created many craters that are much larger than our planet. Scientists are surprised because they calculate that explosive events of this magnitude happen once every 500,000 years. Well, we have witnessed two events in the past fifteen years that surpass the power contained in all of the world's nuclear bombs. Could these impacts be close together because they are intended to be prophetic samples?

Revelation 8 predicts a day in the near future when burning hail (a meteoric firestorm) will set Earth on fire and two horrific asteroid impacts will impact Earth. Twenty-five percent of Earth's population will die as a result of God's wrath. These apocalyptic events are hard to fathom even though they are plainly written in Scripture, so God generously offers prophetic samples to help us overcome unbelief.

It is as though He is whispering, "Look at the many craters on the moon and look at the recent craters on Jupiter! These are samples!" Do not forget, Noah predicted that enough water would fall from the sky to cover the whole earth. Unfortunately, almost everyone found Noah's prediction too hard to believe.

Prophetic Sample #1

God understands our limitations. Because the birth of Jesus would be unlike any other, Isaac's birth was supposed to serve as a prophetic sample of Messiah's virgin birth. To help ancient Israel believe that God would actually assume the form of a human being in the future, God waited until it was biologically impossible for Sarah to have a child before giving her a miracle baby!

The story surrounding Isaac's miraculous birth was to be a prophetic sample. Isaac's birth was supposed to help Israel anticipate Messiah's miraculous birth, but Israel did not believe and did not cooperate with God's plan. In fact, people still scoff at the idea that Jesus' mother was a virgin, but I'm getting ahead of myself. There is more to Isaac's story that needs to be told. So please take a few minutes to consider a really neat story.

Background

Abraham was born six years before Noah died. The Bible indicates that Terah, the father of Abraham, was born 214 years after the flood and Terah was 130 years old when Abraham was born. (Genesis 11:32, 12:4)* We know that Noah lived 350 years after the flood; therefore, Abraham was born 344 years after the flood. (Genesis 9:28)

We do not know how old Abraham was when God called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees, but we do know that after getting as far as Haran, Abraham settled there until his father died. When Abraham was seventy-five years old, God commanded Abraham to leave Haran and continue his journey to Canaan. (Genesis 12:4) Altogether, Abraham lived in Canaan for 100 years, dying at the age of 175. (Genesis 25:7)

* Note: Genesis 11:26 says, "After Terah had lived seventy years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran." This verse should be translated to mean, "After Terah had lived seventy years, he became a father. His sons were Abram, Nahor and Haran." Some people interpret this verse to mean that Terah became the father of Abraham, Nahor and Haran in the same year when Terah was seventy, but this is impossible when Genesis 11:32 and 12:4 are considered. Abraham was seventy-five when Terah died at the age of 205.

Starting over

After God destroyed the world in Noah's day, He put a new plan into action. He searched Earth for a special person to start something wonderful. God wanted to establish a new group of "trustees" to share His gospel. Prior to the flood, God entrusted divine truth to patriarchs. This system became ineffective within a mere ten generations. By the time Noah was born, the world had reached the point of no return. After God destroyed the world and dispersed defiant mankind at the Tower of Babel, He knew that the truth about Him and His will for mankind would soon become distorted and corrupted. To combat Lucifer's evil schemes and man's ignorance and arrogance, God decided to implement a new plan. He chose one family to serve an ever increasing number of families on Earth. In other words, God designed that one family would both demonstrate and proclaim His character of love and His generous offer of salvation to the world. This "enlightened family" would grow proportionately in size as the population of the world grew, and this parallel growth would enable one nation to serve all of the nations of the world as the trustee of divine truth.

It is important to understand that from the beginning of sin, the plan of salvation has operated as a living trust. A living trust is a legitimate process whereby a benefactor distributes his wealth to beneficiaries according to design. When a benefactor is unable to do this for himself, he appoints a trustee to act on his behalf.

The trustee is required to distribute the wealth according to the terms stated in the trust. Of course, the trustee assumes a serious responsibility when he agrees to fulfill his obligation. Usually, trustees are paid well to fulfill their duties. I have digressed for a moment because God is our Benefactor and the whole world is the beneficiary of His amazing grace. (John 3:16)

God chose Abraham and his offspring to serve as trustees of divine truth. God chose Israel to distribute God's grace and truth to the nations of Earth and they agreed to serve. (Exodus

19:1-8; Isaiah 49:6)

Three Reasons

God chose Abraham to be the father of this family of trustees for three reasons. First, Abraham had a heart for God. Abraham was not afraid to trust God. His faith in God was extraordinary and this delighted God. As sinners go, Abraham was as pure in heart as anyone could be.

He was eager to please God in word and deed. He is the first man in the Bible to be called a prophet. (Genesis 20:7) Second, Abraham was upright, a generous and loving man. Even though he knew the value of money and became wealthy, he did not chase wealth. He even gave the best land to Lot, his undeserving nephew.

Finally, Abraham was diligent and thoughtful. He genuinely cared for others and almost everyone regarded him as a man who could be trusted. Abraham *earned* the respect of those who knew him because he was honest, thoughtful, consistent, honorable in purpose, and generous in spirit and action.

So, God chose Abraham to be the father of His trustees and He eagerly looked forward to having an expanding nation of people who mirrored the character of "father Abraham."

In spite of his character strengths, Abraham also had a few character flaws. Fearing for his life, he lied twice about his relationship with his wife. (Genesis 12:12; 20:2) He told Pharaoh and later on, King Abimelech, that Sarah was his sister. True, Sarah was a half-sister because she and Abraham had the same father. (Genesis 20:12)

The problem was Sarah's beauty. She was unusually beautiful and Abraham feared that powerful men might kill him in order to take her. (Killing a husband in order to acquire a beautiful woman was not uncommon in ancient times. Remember how King David killed Uriah in order to take Bathsheba as his wife?) Abraham lied to avoid personal injury. If God had not dramatically intervened both times, Abraham would have ruined God's master plan before it had even started!

God knew that Abraham and Sarah were childless and He embedded this grievous handicap into His master plan for them. Even though she was stunning on the outside, Sarah felt grossly inferior on the inside. According to the culture of that time, Sarah felt humiliated wherever she went.

She was an embarrassment to Abraham because she was a barren (worthless) woman. She might as well have been covered with leprosy. Abraham wanted a son and Sarah desperately wanted children, too. Even after forty years of marriage, and endless sexual remedies and techniques, there were no children! But the truth is that Sarah's infertility was part of God's master plan.

One day the Lord appeared to Abraham and made this promise: "All the land that you see I will

give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." (Genesis 13:15-17)

Later on, the Lord gave Abraham a vision: ". . . 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.' But Abram said, 'O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.'

Then the word of the Lord came to him: 'This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.' He took him outside and said, 'Look up at the heavens and count the stars – if indeed you can count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:1-6)

The previous sentence, "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness," deserves an entire book, but I must stay on topic. However, I will say that a childless Abram went to bed that night in perfect peace. God saw that Abraham believed His words and God was very pleased. God had promised Abraham that he would have a son and many descendants.

Abram not only believed God, but he also quit worrying about his hopeless situation – for a while.

Lord, We Are Tired of Trying

I am sure you are acquainted with the story that produced Ishmael. If not, please review it in Genesis 16. To save space, the heart of the story is this: Sarah offered Abraham her young slave, an Egyptian handmaid named Hagar. Sarah reasoned that since she owned Hagar, Hager's offspring would be counted as Sarah's own. An eighty-five year old Abraham considered the offer, and even though he knew this arrangement was wrong, he accepted his wife's offer. When Hagar became pregnant, she taunted Sarah with her inability to conceive, and contempt quickly developed between the two women. Sarah blamed Abraham for her misery and Abraham deflected responsibility by saying that Hagar was *her* servant and to treat her as she wished.

Sarah punished Hagar harshly and Hagar ran away. An angel found the pregnant fugitive by a spring in the desert and told her to return to Sarah and remain her slave. For the next thirteen years, Hagar and Ishmael lived with Abraham and Sarah, and Abraham loved the boy as much as any father could love his son.

Meanwhile, back in the tent, Sarah continued to languish in a tormented and hopeless state. She was a childless woman and that made her feel even less of a woman than Hagar, her slave. It looked to Sarah as though she would never graduate from Desert University.

For thirteen years, the Lord said nothing. He just looked down from Heaven on the tensions

taking place in a small tent in Canaan. When Abraham was ninety-nine, the Lord appeared before Abraham. He promised to make Abraham the father of many nations (Genesis 17:5) and He promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants.

The Lord also promised that Sarah would become the mother of nations. Abraham was overwhelmed. "Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, 'Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?' And Abraham said to God, 'If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!'

Then God said, 'Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers.

He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.' " (Genesis 17:17-21)

The real purpose behind this visit was to reset the master plan. Abraham and Sarah had made a big mess of God's plans. They had shown a lack of faith in God and they attempted to justify their sin. However, because a righteous God will have nothing to do with sin, He decided to start over with a new plan. He changed their identity.

They would no longer be called Abram and Sarai; they would instead be called Abraham and Sarah. He also imposed the ritual of circumcision: "Then God said to Abraham ' . . . Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.' . . .

On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, and his son Ishmael was thirteen; Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that same day." (See Genesis 17:9-26.)

"Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. . . . Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.'

And she added, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.' The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.

"But Sarah saw that the [fourteen year old] son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking [baby Isaac out of jealousy], and she said to Abraham, 'Get rid of that

slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.'

The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his [firstborn] son. But God said to him, 'Do not be so distressed about the boy [Ishmael] and your [Egyptian] maidservant. [Sarah has suffered enough.] Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned [as trustees of divine truth]. I will make [Ishmael] the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring.' " (See Genesis 21:1-12, insertions mine.)

"Some time later [thirty-three years*] God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. Then God said, 'Take your son, your only son [remaining with you], Isaac, whom you love [with all your heart], and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.'

Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled 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. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the [mountain top, the] place [of the sacrifice] in the distance. He 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.'

"Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac 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?'

Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.

He [broke down with many tears explaining the situation. He] bound his [willing] son Isaac and laid him [gently] on the altar, on top of the wood. Then [with a broken heart] he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. '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.'

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

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, 'I swear by myself,' declares the Lord, 'that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 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, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.' " (See Genesis 22:1-18, insertions mine.)

* Note: Jewish tradition says that Isaac was thirty-seven years old at the time. We know that Isaac lived to be 180 years old. (Genesis 35:28) Given the longevity of those who lived close to the flood and the fact that Isaac did not marry until he was forty, my understanding is that Isaac was a minor of thirty-three years – the same age as Jesus was when He died.

Prophetic Sample #2 – Atonement for Sin

As we looked at Prophetic Sample #1, we can see how Isaac's birth was biologically impossible and this was to serve as a prophetic sample of Christ's birth. Now, let us consider Prophetic Sample #2. Isaac's death on Mount Moriah was to serve as a prophetic sample of Messiah's death.

Both deaths involved a son who was the apple of his father's eye. Both deaths constituted a great sacrifice – both for the son and for the father. Both sons were innocent of guilt, but their deaths were required for the purpose of atonement. Remember, a burnt offering is an offering made to God for the purpose of atonement. (Leviticus 1:4)

Isaac was to die as a burnt offering. This means *atonement* was the reason for his death. God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to atone for Abraham's sin with Hagar. In other words, the sacrifice of Isaac for Abraham's sin is Prophetic Sample #2 – our Heavenly Father would give up His dearly beloved Son in order to provide atonement for our sins!

Prophetic Sample #3 – Death on the Altar of Burnt Offering

Closely study these words again: "**Then God said, 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.'**" (Genesis 22:2, italics mine) The death of Isaac on Mount Moriah was a prophetic sample of Christ's death which was supposed to take place on Mount Moriah! Yes, we know that Jesus died outside the city of Jerusalem, on a hill called Golgotha. (John 19:17) But that was not God's initial plan! It was God's plan that Jesus die on the Altar of Burnt Offering in the temple!

Please consider this Messianic prophecy. This prophecy would have been fulfilled if Israel had received as Messiah at the First Advent: "**And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication.**"

They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. . . .

On that day a fountain [of blood] will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity." (Zechariah 12:10,11; 13:1, insertion mine)

If Israel had fallen in love with Messiah and received Him as its King, then, as this text indicates, (a) the death of Messiah would have caused bitter grief throughout Israel, and (b) Jesus would have died as the result of piercing (that is, His throat cut). Sacrificial animals were slain on the Altar of Burnt Offering by having their carotid arteries cut (Hebrew: *daqar* - to wound or stab). This process produces a fountain of blood because the systolic force during a heartbeat causes the blood to squirt from the wound until the blood volume decreases to the point of death.

Now before you become upset with this concept, please consider another Messianic prophecy that would have been fulfilled if Israel had received Messiah at the First Advent: **"If someone asks him, 'What are these wounds on your body?' he will answer, 'The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.'**" (Zechariah 13:6, italics mine)

The phrase, "the house of my friends," is a reference to the temple in Jerusalem. If the Jews had received Messiah as Lord and King, Jesus would have died among His friends and He would have died at the temple – the house of Israel. Unfortunately, things did not turn out this way because Israel rejected God. The trustees of divine truth killed Divine Truth.

Shortly before His death on the cross, Jesus pronounced this benediction on Israel because of its rebellion. He said, **"Look, your house is left to you desolate."** (Matthew 23:38) This statement means that God will never again dwell in His temple on Mount Moriah!

Notice the parallel: Isaac was to be offered as a sacrifice on an altar as an atonement for sin. His experience was to be a prophetic sample highlighting the death of Jesus on the Altar of Burnt Offering.

Prophetic Sample #4 – Mount Moriah

To make Isaac's death a prophetic sample that goes beyond reasonable argument, God specifically commanded Abraham to take Isaac to specific spot on Mount Moriah. Why not conduct the sacrifice closer to home or better yet, in the backyard? There is a simple explanation.

Centuries later, God's temple would be built on this specific spot on Mount Moriah and it was God's plan that Jesus should die on the Altar of Burnt Offering in the temple at Jerusalem – the very same spot where Isaac had been offered centuries earlier! Remember, Jesus was *not* supposed to die on a cross outside of the city. Jesus did not commit a capital offense. (Deuteronomy 21:22,23) It was God's plan that He should die on the Altar of Burnt Offering as "The Lamb of God."

The place where Abraham offered up Isaac (the top of Mount Moriah) became holy ground. That spot of ground was to be a perpetual monument to Abraham's faith, and not only

Abraham's, but for all sinners who grasp by faith the atonement that was made there. Later on, this spot would become God's dwelling place.

This is why Moses warned Israel just before entering Canaan, "**Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. Offer them *only at the place the Lord will choose in one of your tribes* [Judah], and there [at that place] observe everything I command you.**" (Deuteronomy 12:13,14, insertions mine)

We know God deliberately chose the site of Isaac's altar because He told Abraham where to offer him. Before we go any further, we need to jump forward about 500 years and notice how God reestablished the importance of this particular spot on Mount Moriah during the reign of King David.

David sinned against the Lord by conducting a census of military age men. Even the seasoned warrior Joab knew this action was wrong. "**But Joab replied to the king, 'May the Lord your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?'**" (2 Samuel 24:3)

Nevertheless, at the end of nine months and twenty days, the census was completed. Joab reported that Israel had 800,000 and Judah had 500,000 men able to handle the sword – an army that totaled 1.3 million men.

When he received the results of the census, "David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.' Before David got up the next morning, the word of the Lord had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer: 'Go and tell David, "This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you." '

"David said to Gad, 'I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.' So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, 'Enough! Withdraw your hand.' The angel of the Lord was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the Lord, 'I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family.'

"On that day Gad went to David and said to him, 'Go up and **build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.**' So David went up, as the Lord had commanded through Gad. When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. Araunah said, 'Why has my lord the king come to his servant?' 'To buy your threshing floor,' David answered, 'so I can build

an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped.'

"Araunah said to David, 'Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. O king, Araunah gives all this to the king.' Araunah also said to him, 'May the Lord your God accept you.'

But the king replied to Araunah, 'No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God **burnt offerings** that cost me nothing.' So **David bought the threshing floor** and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

David built an altar to the Lord there and **sacrificed burnt offerings** and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped." (2 Samuel 24:10-25, emphasis mine)

Several years later, notice where the temple with its Altar of Burnt Offering was built: "Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem **on Mount Moriah**, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. It was on **the threshing floor of Araunah** the Jebusite, the place provided by David." (2 Chronicles 3:1, emphasis mine)

The Lord chose Mount Moriah – the very spot where Abraham had offered up Isaac and the very spot where David was commanded to build the *Altar of Burnt Offering*. It was this very spot that God chose as the location for the temple and the Altar of Burnt Offering.

Why? Abraham had passed the greatest test of faith that a person can face at this place and God made it holy ground. Isaac was to die on an altar at the very same place where Jesus would die on an altar. This was God's original plan!

Prophetic Sample #5 – Total Submission to His Father

Look at these verses: "On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He 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.'

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac 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?'

"Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on [silently] together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He [explained the situation and God's demand for atonement.

Isaac was willing to lay down his life. Abraham] bound his son Isaac and [gently] laid him on the

altar, on top of the wood. Then [with tears pouring from his eyes] he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied.

'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.' " (Genesis 22:4-12, insertions mine)

Three things are impressive in this scene: First, Abraham clearly understood the need for blood atonement and he did not quibble with God about needing atonement for his sin. Second, Abraham believed that God would resurrect Isaac from the dead. We see this in Abraham's words to his servants, "we will come back to you."

We also see Abraham's faith regarding Isaac's resurrection because Abraham knew that God had promised that Isaac would be the heir of the covenant. In other words, Abraham reasoned that Isaac would have to be brought back to life in order for God's covenant to continue! Last, and most important, Abraham loved God more than he loved Isaac. What a man!

"By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death." (Hebrews 11:17-19)

What does this story say about thirty-three year old Isaac's submission to his 133 year old father? This is an incredible prophetic sample pointing to the life and ministry of Jesus and His submission to His Father!

Prophetic Sample #6 – On the Mountain of the Lord

"Abraham 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. So 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." (Genesis 22:13,14)

Through teary eyes, Abraham looked up and he immediately saw two things. He saw a ram caught in a thicket, but more importantly, he saw that God Himself would provide the atonement that every sinner needs. I am sure that Abraham and Isaac wept together as Abraham named that rock on Mount Moriah, "**The Lord Will Provide** [the atoning sacrifice]."

The nation of Israel should have remembered this name. Israel should have understood this profound prophetic sample, but arrogance and ignorance reduced their sacrifices on the Altar of Burnt Offering to mere rituals. How sad! Eventually, this nation of trustees had to be destroyed because they would not learn the intimate relationship that exists between obedience, faith, and love.

Prophetic Sample #7 – Blessings through Faith

"The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, 'I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 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, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.' " (Genesis 22:15-18)

For decades, God severely tested the faith of Sarah and Abraham. Allowing their frustrations to get the better of them, they finally failed. Abraham was eighty-five when he threw in the towel and went to bed with a slave woman. Sarah and Abraham almost ruined God's master plan through the works of the flesh.

In fact, after they finally understood the big mess they had made of God's plans, God started over. He changed their names and He circumcised Abraham and all the males in his household. Abraham and Sarah had fallen for the oldest temptation in history. That temptation is to justify sin. Lucifer did it, a third of the angels did it, Adam and Eve did it, and Abraham and Sarah did it. Abraham committed adultery and it brought his family and his descendants more grief than we can imagine.

Finally, after letting the guilty pair stew in the results of their own doing, God started over. He came down one day and changed their names. God would have been justified emasculating Abraham, but of course, this would not have resolved the problem, so God started over. He instituted a covenant of circumcision.

This covenant in the flesh was to be a perpetual reminder to Abraham and every male who came through him that sexual immorality is an abomination to God. Sexual immorality produces suffering, heartache, separation, and death.

By the time God demanded the life of Isaac – the one thing that Abraham treasured most – Abraham had learned his lesson and he faithfully carried out the commandment of the Lord, even though his heart was breaking every step of the way. It may have been a journey of three days, but to Abraham I am sure it seemed like a lifetime.

And this is the final prophetic sample that all of us need to absorb today: Faithfully doing all that God commands is painful at times – sometimes, for a long time. Often, doing God's will hurts and it may come with the threat of death, but standing firm on God's side and doing what is right even when your emotions are against you –this is the meaning of living by faith!

When we are willing to live this way, God gives us the grace to endure and He credits our faith as righteousness. There is no greater blessing than having God as "our shield and exceeding great reward."

I hope this helps you understand why God chose Abraham. I also hope you understand why Abraham is called the father of the faithful, and most of all, I hope you understand why every whole-hearted believer in Christ is called "the seed of Abraham." (Galatians 3:28,29)

Larry Wilson