

# Sunday Messenger



## MARK 9:2-10

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean

## God's Love

Among all the trials that Abraham faced thought his life, the call to offer his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice, was the toughest. We admire his obedience and trust. The test proved beyond any doubt that our father in faith feared God. His obedience brought blessing to all the nations on the earth. A few centuries later God put himself to the test. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). He was able to catch the hand of Abraham and prevent the death of his beloved Isaac but He was 'unable' to seize those hands who were nailing His only beloved Son to the cross. Why?

### *Two Stories*

Abraham responds to God's calling with: "Here I am". The old man is familiar with the Voice and is ready for the instructions. Yet, I doubt he expected the following: "Take your only son, whom you love and offer him as a burnt offering". In the Gospel, Jesus is God's beloved son, sent to the world. His life will be an offering burning with love for humanity. It is easy to offer something we do not need but to offer something we love is another matter. As the story continues, Abraham explains to his servants: "The boy and I will go over there to worship" (Gen 22:7). In the Gospel, Jesus talks with Moses and Elijah about the sacrifice that will take place in Jerusalem (Lk 9:31; Heb 10:12).

Abraham shows incredible faith when he says "we will come back to you" (Gen 22:5) after the worship.



The letter to the Hebrews makes this comment about his faith: "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son. Of this son it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back'" (Heb 11:17-19). Jesus is sure as well that his sacrifice will not end with death. He forbids his disciples to talk about his transfiguration till his resurrection (Mk 9:9).

Abraham loaded Isaac with the wood for the burned offering and Jesus carried the cross. Both of them were climbing a mountain. Yet, the ending of the stories differ.

### ***The Lamb of God***

As Abraham predicted, God indeed provided the lamb for the sacrifice. The first Jew "lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a

ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son" (Gen 22:13).

The lamb plays an important role in the Bible. When the Israelites were about to leave Egypt, they had a special meal. It included unleavened bread and unblemished lamb. The blood of the lamb on the doorpost protected them from the Destroyer who would pass that night through Egypt (Ex 12: 21-23). Isaiah says that the Messiah will be like "a lamb that is led to the slaughter, stricken for the transgression of the people" (Is 53:7-8). This messiah is Jesus. John the Baptist calls him "the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The author of the book of Revelation had a vision of heavenly liturgy. He saw a Lamb, as though it has been slain, but alive and everybody worshiped it with a song:

*"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth" (Rev 5:9-10).*

We are the followers of the Lamb. He is our light. The river of the water of life flows from his throne and it quenches the thirst of our souls (Rev 22:1).

### **Conclusion**

Many of us doubt God. We are unable to trust Him and when put to the test we often lose faith. We have a lot to learn from Abraham and a lot more to learn about God. The sacrifice, which did not take place on a mountain in the land of Moria, took place centuries later at Calvary. The action of Abraham proved his trust. The Cross reveals God's love for us. God spares Abraham and his beloved son Isaac. Yet, he does not spare himself and His own beloved son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul's rhetorical question is anchored here:

*"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things" (Romans 8:31-32)?*

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*May God bless us all*



### **ROMANS 8:31-39**

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised— who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.