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MID-WEST BIBLE SCHOOL - 1995

ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Class #6

Faith made Perfect

Reading: Genesis 22

Well, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, we come to that act in Abraham's life, that James describes in these words, 'his faith was made perfect'. What a monumental statement that is, and you know, b&s, if you've never appreciated before what this act really meant, just turn with me to Hebrews 11 for a minute, and just see what the apostle Paul says about this wonderful thing that Abraham did, when he was prepared to offer up his only begotten son. Look what he says in Hebrews 11 and verse 17, he said, 'by faith Abraham when he was tried offered up Isaac, and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead from whence also he received him in a figure'. Now that's easy to read, but now let me read it to you from the Greek; I'm not a Greek expert but I tell you what, the Greek experts tell us that the tenses in the Greek language are all important. They are unique in some respects, and this is what the apostle is saying in verse 17, 'By faith, when he was tried Abraham hath offered up Isaac' (in his mind, b&s, it was done! past tense) and then it says, 'he that received the promises' and the Greek is 'gladly received the promises' and that's how the RV puts it.

Now try and comprehend this, that here is a man that has the determination to kill his son, and although his heart would be full of heaviness and fear, there was deep down inside of him, a gladness about it all! Think about that attitude! He that had gladly received the promises, that was the frame of mind by which he was doing it; 'offered up' in the Greek perfect tense means 'was ready to offer' in that frame of mind. Now you think about that, and he says that 'God was able (dunantos) had the power to raise him from the dead'; that was his faith, b&s, and if that's not enough, Paul finishes up in verse 19 with this statement, 'from whence also he (Abraham) received him in a parable'. Abraham did! Now you put all that together; there was a determination to offer up his son that despite the drama and the anxiety, there was an underlying gladness about this, because Abraham in that frame of mind, was ready to offer up his son, because he attributed to God the power to raise him, and when he was raised, Abraham understood that it was a parable. Now, no wonder why James calls that 'faith made perfect,

absolutely perfect, and this was a monumental act, b&s, which the apostle Paul later on was to say, 'by which he obtained the promise'; we teach interested friends that Abraham hasn't obtained the promise; Paul says he has; all we know, of course, is what he means. That he hasn't really obtained it, he's dead, but b&s, the certainty of Abraham getting the Land, is the certainty of God's existence. That's the way it was done!

Now we're going to consider this chapter together. And this chapter, b&s, is more than about Abraham and Isaac; and it's not just a type. This takes on the dimensions of something a little bit bigger than a type; you see here, b&s, we have the words, 'and it came to pass after these things', so this is happening now after all that's happened to Abraham including, including Genesis 17 where God said, 'Abraham, I'm going to make a covenant with you about fatherhood'. Remember? and it's going to be between Me and you', and that's what this chapter's about. Now we come, b&s, to really sharing fatherhood; it might have been a covenant with a bit of a promise back in Genesis 17, but now Abraham, we are really going to share something together! Now you watch what happens in this chapter, because at the middle of it, there's a reaction by God! I don't know how to express my feelings about this chapter; I was sitting back in my room trying to get into my mind, how on earth I could ever convey to you what's in my mind about it, but here, b&s, is the real thing, the sharing of fatherhood with God, the giving of an only begotten son.

Wasn't that something to share! And so the record has it, b&s, 'that God did tempt Abraham', and we have difficulty with that, or some people do, and we say, 'well, James says that God doesn't tempt any man and the word in the Greek must be different'. But it's not, this is Hebrew, of course, but when Paul quotes this in Hebrews 11, it's the same word that James uses. It depends upon the context and what is meant. God doesn't turn anyone on to lust in temptation; He doesn't turn a switch, God is untemptable says James, and being consistent with Himself, He won't turn your passions on, that's your own lust and mine own lust, but He will bring us into positions of trial, and that's the other context in which the word is used. And we notice that God tempted Abraham and it wasn't until the crowning act of faith came to its climax that the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven, and that's significant as I'll show you; and the great change from the title to the name, b&s, that's a critical point, was a wonderful thing.

Now he's to take his son, says verse 2, ah, but wait a minute, it's his only son; oh, he had Ishmael didn't he? but Ishmael is the lad, remember? he's the lad; it's got nothing to do with the promise. This boy is his only son, and you know, b&s, the word 'yachiyd' here that is used for 'only' is 'yachiyd'; it means to become as one, and it's rendered three times in this chapter by the word 'together'. At the end of verse 6, 'they went both of them together', and the end of verse 8 says the same thing 'they went both of them together' and verse 19, 'So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together'. So he had his only begotten son who went with him, it wasn't as if there's the father and there's an only begotten son; he's talking about father and son, together as one, that's what he's saying. That's the idea behind that word as proven by

that contextual use of the word 'together'; now that word is found in Psalm 22 and we're going to go here twice this morning, but let's come for the first time back to Psalm 22.

You know what Psalm 22 is all about! 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' those poignant words which open that psalm, b&s, and we are painfully aware of what this psalm is all about. And in verse 20 we read, 'deliver my soul from the sword; my yachiyd (my only one says the margin; that's the word, b&s) So this psalm is about father and son and we're going to come back here at the end, and see the absolute connection with this psalm with Genesis 22, and how wonderful 22's are you know, not that God inspired chapter and verses, but it's easy to remember, isn't it? The two 22's, Psalm 22 and Genesis 22 are about father and son together, doing things together. And look at the context of this psalm, b&s, verse 4, about the agony upon the cross, these are the poignant words of our Lord Jesus Christ, He said, 'our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted and thou didst deliver them; they cried unto thee and were delivered. They trusted in thee and were not confounded; but I'm not going to have that privilege'. See what it's saying, b&s? and hanging upon that cross He says, I think of the time when our fathers put their trust in you and you delivered them. Three times He says it, they cried and you heard them and you delivered them; they trusted in thee and were not confounded, but I'm a worm, and no man; and I haven't got that privilege, He's saying. That's the difference, b&s, there wasn't going to come a voice from heaven and say, 'don't do it!' and He knew that; He knew, didn't He? and those words there are not the words of a man confident that he's going to be delivered from death, those are the words of a man who knows he's not going to be delivered out of death, because he's a worm and no man BUT, you see? how poignant are those words, b&s, when we consider Genesis 22 against that psalm, which is its counterpart in the Old Testament. There's no deliverance here, it's all the way, isn't it? because of a principle that we'll look at later on in Genesis 22.

And what are the principles? It's got to be all the way, doesn't it? because verse 27 says, 'all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto Yahweh: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee'. That's why it's got to be all the way because 'Abraham, in thee, Genesis 12, but in Genesis 22 it says 'in thy seed' shall all families of the earth be blessed; no longer just in thee, but now in your seed, and He says how else could that happen? It's got to be all the way, b&s. And so Genesis 22 has its mirror in Psalm 22, doesn't it?

Coming back to Genesis 22 (just keep something there, b&s, because we will be going one or two other places this morning, because I do want to look these references up, they're too important to miss) and so in verse 2 of Genesis 22, 'he's got to go to the land of Moriah'. Now 'Moriah' b&s, means 'Yahweh will be seen' and that's why I said, at the critical moment He was seen, wasn't He? Elohim had tempted Abraham, there was a lesser manifestation in that, but at the critical moment, God, Yahweh, was to be seen, the name was to be seen at the critical point. That's what Moriah means; now Moriah, b&s, is only ever found in one other place in the bible. You have a look at it with me, in 2 Chronicles 3 and verse 1, it has to do with the glory, isn't that marvellous? the sufferings and the glory that should follow, and it's going to happen on mount Moriah,

for here in 2 Chronicles chapter 3, when Solomon was to build His house, b&s, look what it says! 'Then Solomon began to build the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem in mount Moriah', the only other occurrence of the word, but look at the notation, 'where Yahweh appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite'. Verse 7, it says, 'which was seen of David his father'. Ah, see Moriah, Yahweh will be seen, well, it says he saw Him at mount Moriah, what did he see? What did he see?

1 Chronicles 21, this is what he saw, how remarkable was this? Listen to this, talk about a story, b&s, look! David has sinned, he's numbered the people hasn't he? and so we read in verse 14, 'that Yahweh sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men', because of David numbering the people. 'And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it and as he was destroying Yahweh beheld, and repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay your hand', (can't you hear the echoes of Genesis 22?) 'And the angel of Yahweh stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite and David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of Yahweh stand between heaven and earth, having a drawn sword in his hand'. (Can't you see Abraham's knife lifted up, b&s?) 'and then David saw the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces'. See what he saw? Now you think about it? what was the point that's being made? What is the connection? It's only twice that word is used, and in reference to David seeing a sword hanging over Jerusalem just as Isaac bound as he was, starring wide eyed, as that knife hung over him ready to be offered. But what was the point, b&s, what was the point? Why is that repeated in those two places? Well, what had David done? HE HAD NOT BELIEVED THAT GOD WOULD MAKE HIS SEED AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN, had he? He went and numbered the people, he didn't believe Him; ah, he did I suppose, but it was a moment of weakness; Joab warned him, a man of lesser calibre warned him not to do that, but he persisted and he wanted to see what was the strength of Israel, and he didn't believe that God would make his seed as the stars of heaven; 'and the sword of the angel hung over the city because he numbered the people', didn't he? And as Abraham heard the voice of God out of heaven, David saw the angel halfway between heaven and earth in vengeance. He wanted David to be impressed with Abraham's faith; now b&s, on mount Moriah there was a little hill in Jerusalem called mount Moriah, and they stuck a pole up there didn't they? Ok, they put a pole on top of that hill, and they called the hill in the Hebrew tongue, Golgotha. And we're very adept at winding theories around that, and we talk about Goliath's skull (I don't think it has anything to do with Goliath's skull; I think that's a separate thing entirely; I think it's typical but I don't think it has anything to do with Golgotha. But you say, it means 'the place of a skull', yes it does, but you go back, it's only ever used in one singular way in the Old Testament, and never in any other way.

It's used in the book of Numbers, for numbering the people. Golgotha, you say, well, how come for the place of the skull? because the colloquial expression 'counting heads' comes from that expression. They talk about the heads of the people, the people who represented them, who counted them, that's what Golgotha means, it's never used in any other way, the only other rendition you've got of it other than Paul's in Numbers, is

in the book of Exodus when they gather the manna and it says, 'an omer for every man', that's what it says in Exodus 16, and there He was, b&s, up there, numbered with the transgressors. And Paul says 'He tasted death for every man', and there was David who numbered the people because he wanted to see what his military strength was. And there was the message of the angel, because Abraham believed that God who make his seed as the stars of the heaven, and the third time we've got mount Moriah in that significance, is a man hanging up there, and all the world would be numbered with Him if they wanted to. None was excluded! He was tasting death for every single man upon the earth, and He didn't have to number them, because He knew His Father would, and He knew that because of mount Moriah back in Genesis 22. He knew the outcome; of the strength of conviction that would come emotionally upon people when they saw what a father did with his child. He didn't need to number God's people, but David did in the middle, didn't he? So either end of the story we've got mount Moriah when God is going to number His people as the stars of the heaven, and in the middle we've got a man who doubted that, and a sword hanging between Jerusalem and him, to remind him he should believe that; the only two occurrences of the word 'mount Moriah'! Isn't that remarkable? I think that's absolutely remarkable, b&s.

Well, let's come back to Genesis 22, there are more remarkable things here! really remarkable things. You know, in verse 2, we have the fact again, in that he was 'to offer Isaac as a burnt offering', and you see, we swing through that. We say, 'ah, well, Abraham had to put his son to death'. No he didn't! he had to make a burnt offering; you see, b&s, to put a man to death is one thing, to make him a sacrifice is another. A death is a death, but a sacrifice has principles involved in it, hasn't it? Not an ordinary death, sacrifice means it's got a sacrificial content; so God wasn't saying to Abraham 'murder him', Abraham would know by the very term that was being used that there was something going on here that needed understanding; it had a sacrificial content. And 'you go to the place that I will tell you of', which became the place of Solomon's glorious temple, didn't it later on? and the suffering as I said, preceded the glory.

And Abraham arose, verse 3, 'early in the morning' that is significant isn't it? and then we read in verse 4, 'on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and sees the place afar off' (what an incredible expression that is) early in the morning on the third day, there it is. He can see it in the distance, and that's eloquent isn't it, b&s, of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ? who rose early on the third day, didn't He? and He didn't look up to see the place afar off, Abraham was looking that way, but Jesus rose early in the third morning, to look back down over the corridor of time, for all that was accomplished behind Him, and Abraham was looking this way! You see, he saw the promises afar off, and Jesus rose from the dead to look back and see the promises accomplished. Look at the difference, just look at the difference! So here, b&s, is more than just shadow, this is reality that's happening here, and it's flickering forward to that glorious time, when the Son would walk with the Father, wouldn't He?

And we come down to verse 5 and he says here, 'you keep here' he said to the young men, you abide with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship'. Worship? would you feel in a state of mind to 'worship'? I remember sitting in the Adelaide

ecclesia when my first child was born, wasn't a son, it was a girl, but I was the proudest fellow on the face of the earth; I had to nurse her, didn't I, because I wouldn't let Vern do it because I wanted to show everybody 'my daughter', didn't I? And I remember I was sitting there with this little bundle of joy in my hand, and Uncle Perce was alongside me, and we had Genesis 22 read that morning, and I'll never forget it, and he leaned over to me, halfway through the reading and whispered, 'how'd you like to stick a knife in her?' I absolutely froze in my chair! I just absolutely froze, and it came home with thundering force what was going on in that chapter. I'd never been a father before and now I was, and I never, ever comprehended that; and those words went through me like a blade of ice, and I thought what a wonderful thing that was happening. And you see, there he is, going early in the morning, and he's got wood we're told, 'he claved the wood for a burnt offering', and when we read further on in the chapter, b&s, he cut that wood before he started out. What a ridiculous thing to do! I mean he cuts the wood and carries it all the way, but you see, that's the point, isn't it? I mean, there was the very symbol of the suffering, and Jesus said, 'if you don't take up your cross now, you'll never be in God's kingdom'. No good waiting for some climatic act at the end of your life, b&s. No good thinking that somewhere around 96 A.D. you've got to have some great climax in your life whereby that little act is going to get you in the kingdom of God; you pick it up now and you carry it all the way, that's what God was telling him. You wear it, b&s, in life, not at the end; and so he carried that wood all the way, and he's got the lad with him.

A word (lad) in the Hebrew which is used of Joseph when he was 30; wouldn't have a clue of what age Isaac was, but one could hazard a guess, around about 33 perhaps, I don't know! but it's certainly used of Joseph when he was the age of 30, b&s, and Abraham is to come again. No question in his mind whatever, faith is not blind, b&s, it's the evidence of things not seen. It isn't blind, it's got evidence, and the evidence is that that boy is through whom my seed is going to come, not Ishmael, it's this lad, he's the one through whom God's going to develop my seed, no matter what happens. Doesn't matter what happens on that mountain, we're going to come back, the two of us. That was his conviction; that's what you call faith, b&s.

And in verse 6, 'And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son'. That doesn't need any explanation, does it? We know that Jesus carried his own cross, b&s, don't we? until He fell under it; but we know why too, because it says in Isaiah 'that Yahweh hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all'. And Abraham laid the wood on Isaac, didn't he? Between you and Me, Abraham, Me and you; that's what this chapter's all about, b&s, it's all about that, isn't it? Something that Abraham and God at this moment are sharing; Abraham is sharing it in agony, and God is looking down and knowing that in hundreds of years to come, He's going to go through the same process! like this man's going through.

But I want to show you something as we move through here, which is really beautiful, to show you that's exactly what's going on here; it's more than just typical, this is a sharing of fatherhood. And it says, 'they both went together, in verse 6, b&s, yachiyd as one; and you know, Jesus said, 'all men have forsaken Me', but 'I'm not alone', He said in John 16, because 'the Father is with Me'; He never left Him, b&s, He never left Him at

all. He was never alone, hand in hand they walked, didn't they? father and son, and we'll come this afternoon to remember the sacrifice of Christ, won't we? b&s, spare a thought for the Father when you come to think about the Son! God is not without feeling, b&s, we're able to grieve the Holy Spirit, says the apostle. We can actually grieve God; spare a thought for the Father when you come this afternoon, as you watch Him go hand in hand with His Son, for the sins of the world, laying upon Him the iniquity of us all. Think about that, b&s!

Then comes the question in verse 7, from Isaac who's puzzled about all this. 'Where is the lamb?' Jesus never had that puzzlement, b&s, that was never in His mind; He knew exactly why He was walking with the Father, hand in hand, didn't He? But Isaac is puzzled about it, b&s, and you know, the fact that he had to say, 'my father: and he said, Here am I, my son', that's strange language isn't it? You see, that's language which is really telling you that he needed to break Abraham's concentration; he says, 'my father' and Abraham answers, 'oh, yes, what do you want'. Abraham is an absolute figure of concentration on what he's doing, and that's got to be broken by his son; 'where is the lamb?' and Abraham's statement is, b&s, 'God will provide' (Jireh; as later on the place was called Yahweh-jireh) God will see to Him the lamb, is what the Hebrew says. Not just provide, He will see to it, to see something, wasn't it? When the Lord came, it was a question of seeing who He was, not just a provision of God, but seeing who He was. 'Philip haven't I been with you for such a long time and haven't you seen who I am? walking hand in hand with the Father; I am the Father here, Philip, on His behalf'. It's a question of 'God will see to Him the lamb' and He did, b&s, because in this chapter He provided Abraham with a ram. So He's still seeing to it after Genesis 22, and then came the legislation of the Law, and we search in vain for that Lamb, in absolute vain through the Law, you won't find Him anywhere for a sin offering; He didn't appear in the Law, so when the Law had passed and had run its course, b&s, God is still seeing to the Lamb, isn't He? stilling seeing to it, until the day come when John was able to say, 'behold, behold, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world'; it's more than just listening, it's seeing what's going on. And Yahweh's going to be seen in this place, b&s, you see!

'Abraham binds his son', in verse 9, you know, the only occurrence of the Hebrew word there which to me says that Isaac went through an unique experience. No one ever got down like that, and Abraham was prepared, in verse 10, it says 'to slay his son'. That's put very poignantly, isn't it? not slay Isaac, he's slaying his son, and then at the critical time when the knife was raised and it wasn't quivering and it wasn't Abraham saying, 'I hope you stop me, I hope you stop me', every intent, full intent, believing that there was no way out but to obey God and there's a sacrifice to be made, out of which would come joy and gladness, and with a heavy yet glad heart in another sense, he was prepared to offer his son; lo, and behold, from heaven for the first time in this chapter, we have the name given, 'the angel of Yahweh says out of heaven', and God now, full manifestation, because He believes and He sees, b&s, that Abraham is determined to do what God had told him to do, and He sent an angel.

And there Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane and He's saying, 'I can have 12

legions of angels'; He said, 'Could I not ask the Father, and would He not send me the 12 legions of angels'? And people say, 'ah, no, that's impossible because you know, the scripture had to be fulfilled and we would say to the Lord, 'no, Lord, no!' because our understanding of the bible says you've got to go to death, and we know the principles of the truth, and the implications of that question is 'yes'. Would He not? would you stand there in the garden of Gethsemane and look Him in the eye, who was having sweat roll off Him like drops of blood, and say 'no'? The answer is 'YES'; we're talking about a willing offering, b&s. And why would the Lord say that? why would He pray 'that this cup pass from Me?' Oh, we say, it's impossible! You know, that's exactly what He didn't say, because the Lord Jesus Christ knew the scripture better than all of us put together a hundred times over would ever know it; He knew all about what was going on, He knew the inevitability of that cross, b&s, but He did it with Him and His Father. He said, 'all things are possible', He didn't limit God! to the words of a book; He didn't limit God in any way, although He knew, how else would the scripture be fulfilled. And He could have had 12 legions of angels, couldn't He? so the apostle says, 'forasmuch as His children are partakers of flesh and blood, so for He Himself likewise' then he goes on to say, 'He didn't take upon Himself the nature of angels; He took upon Himself the seed of Abraham'. Why put it that way? Well, if we're critical in our reading of the Greek text, it says, 'he didn't lay hold upon the nature of angels for help' 'but He came to help the seed of Abraham'. Look what's happening? See the point, b&s, it's not just Paul saying, 'well, if He had the nature of angels He couldn't die, therefore He couldn't be our sacrifice, although He is saying that, that is his argument; but it's wrapped in language to tell us about Genesis 22, that Jesus didn't come to lay hold to help angels, He came here to help men, and He didn't say many, He said the 'seed of Abraham'. And so Paul says in the last verse of Hebrews 2, 'that He's able to run to the cry', and if ever there would have been a cry, here, not audible, b&s, but a bleeding heart of the father for his lad in front of him; (I've got two boys, I couldn't imagine that! can you imagine that heart crying to God? and God ran to that cry, b&s). And here the apostle's beautifully depicting that not only in doctrinal language but in emotional language, and telling us that Jesus went all the way. And He said, 'my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me' and He knew why, because He said, 'Thou art holy that inhabitest the places of Israel'. It was a rhetorical question which He knew the answer to, but you see, b&s, there was a terrible cry but nobody ran to His aid, He went right through it. What for? because He wanted to run to the aid of people like Abraham and people Abraham would produce by his faith, and He was prepared not to have angels help Him do that; all of that is an echo of Genesis 22, isn't it, b&s?

And God here, spoke out of heaven. He spoke out of heaven to rescue his son, didn't He, Abraham's son I mean? And the voice of God, b&s, it wasn't the voice; Abraham heard the voice of words, as Moses would describe later on, the audible voice from Sinai, it was all in the abstract, wasn't it? but the Lord Jesus Christ came as the WORD made flesh and the angels appeared in that term, b&s, with no voice! God was seen there, actually seen; the women saw them. It was all very real and here it was a promise; 'And when Abraham lifted up his eyes, in verse 13, when God had told him not to destroy his only begotten son, because God said, 'I now know, verse 12, 'I know', b&s, now you listen to this, this is the point that I was alluding to, when I talked about

father and son. Now listen carefully, because I believe this is the centrepiece of this chapter. Listen! He said halfway through verse 12, 'for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me'. And then down in verse 16, 'And said, By myself have I sworn, saith Yahweh, for because thou hast done this thing' this thing, not anything, this thing, 'I know Abraham because you've done this thing'. What was it? A father offered his son. Now listen, when we talk about God manifestation, which is a clinical term really, you just interpret it the way it should be interpreted, we mean by that, that we act like God, we think like God, we love like God, and in this context, we feel like God! And how did He feel? B&S, listen! and this is what I mean, me and you, you and me, God responded to a father killing his son. Now if we're going to talk about God manifestation, in John 3:16 which needs no reminder of, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son', all the Father's asking of you and me, is nothing more or less than what He did Himself, to respond to a father offering his child! He did exactly what He's asking you and I to do. If we therefore, believe that God manifestation is the point aimed at, as far as the truth is concerned, b&s, then we ought to do what He did, 'because you've done this thing'. Isn't that marvellous? Wasn't it Me and you, you and Me? see the sharing there, b&s, of a wonderful thing?

And then Abraham looked behind him, and he sees a ram caught in the thicket, verse 13, but Rotherham has a footnote about that ram about the peculiarity of the Hebrew, and he says it really means 'one ram'; well, there's only one, it wasn't as if two were caught there, but there's an emphasis on the fact that there was only the one caught there. And the ram, b&s, of course, is the leader of the flock; God was going to provide the lamb, but it wasn't a lamb here, as I said, it was never offered under the Law of Moses as a sin offering, but here it's a ram because he's a leader of the flock! And how do we know that? How do we know that that was the significance? because when Aaron was sworn in to be the high priest of the nation, to represent God that God might be seen among the people, what did he have for a consecration? but a ram! didn't he? a ram of consecration. Caught in a thicket, caught in a thicket, caught in a thicket, see the point; inexplicitly caught in a thicket, and the word 'thicket' here is used in Isaiah 9 for 'wickedness'. And that's what caught the Lord Jesus Christ that there was no escape, b&s, and the apostle makes the point, doesn't he, in Romans chapter 8, that after speaking about the diabolical influences that were in his body, which were forever drawing him away from God, he says in Romans 8 and verse 32, 'He that spared not His own Son', because His own Son was caught in the thicket of Romans 7, wasn't He? 'in me dwelleth no good thing', said the apostle Paul, and although the Lord Jesus Christ was sinless, He was caught, b&s, in the thicket of what you and I do, and what all others have done, and there is no escape, because we caught Him! He was caught up because of us! Now you listen!

On the altar there were 4 horns coming out of the corner, weren't there? And when the day came when there were a multiplicity of offerings, when more than one person was offering, a monumental psalm, Psalm 118, 'the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord etc.' a psalm full of Messiah, it says that because they would bring their multiple offerings

and they'd have to slay them and prepare them and whilst they were burning them, of course, it would be quicker to kill than to burn and prepare; they had to be all piled up, so what do they do? They put leather thongs through their legs and hung them on the horns of the altar, didn't they? 'Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar', and so if you were to walk around by the front of the tabernacle and look through the doorway, you would see a horn sticking up among all these thongs, 'caught in the thicket', wouldn't you? It would have been an amazing sight! Why did they hang them on the horns of the altar? They could just as easily pile them up along side the altar, which they did in the days of Solomon because the altar wasn't big enough, and they did pile them up in the court. Why didn't they always do that? because God was building a little bush, and sticking up out of the thongs, was a ram caught in the thicket, because there was a lot of people needed to be sacrificed for, wasn't there? And why a horn? because it's a symbol of power, b&s, a horn is a symbol of power. What's powerful about that? Well, what isn't powerful about that! B&S, the horn sticking up is a symbol of power, and there is no greater power, greater than Russia and America combined, is the power of forgiveness, because the power of forgiveness says, we can lose a battle and never lose the war! That's how powerful it is; forgiveness, b&s, we can lose one battle and be forgiven, and face the enemy the next day, and ultimately beat him, although he may be beaten a dozen times on the battlefield; we can never lose the war because God's forgiveness is more powerful than our sins, b&s, and here was that ram caught in a thicket, and verse 14, it says, 'Abraham called the name of the place 'Yahweh will be seen, as it is said, In the mount of Yahweh it shall be seen'; and it was, because there He was standing there, when everybody else was blind, and on the top of mount Moriah, it was said it was going to be seen; somebody was going to see it, and somebody did! And the centurion stood there and he looked up and watching the behaviour of that man, listening to the gracious words not only to the thief but to John His beloved, and His mother, and listening to His prayer on behalf of the people for His murderers, and the benign look upon His face, b&s, even in agony, the centurion looked up and he said, 'truly, surely that's the Son of God'. So it was seen! God's Son was seen there right on top of mount Moriah even if it had to be seen by a Roman soldier, a centurion! Remarkable isn't it?

And then God says the second time He called to him out of heaven, didn't He, in verse 15, and He says, 'Abraham, I'm going to make a covenant with you now, it's all over, Abraham; it's no longer if anymore, if no longer exists, Abraham. Here comes the seal, by Myself! You and Me, Me and you! Abraham, you've done what I'm going to do. That's what's going to make it absolutely sure, Abraham'. So Paul says 'he obtained the promise', and what was it going to be, b&s, the seal of that? **BECAUSE YOU'VE DONE THIS THING**; now come back to Psalm 22, if you think up until now, perhaps we've stretched that a little bit, just have a look what happens here. In Psalm 22, b&s, which deals with the sacrifice of God's Son in agony on behalf of the sins of the world, b&s, what do we see? In verse 30 we read, 'A seed, a seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to Yahweh for a generation' (see it's the promises made to Abraham). They shall come and declare His righteousness (Gen.15) unto a people that should be born, that he hath done this!' and all we have to put on there is the word 'thing', because that's what the chapter's about. See the point? Because that he hath done this thing, you and

Me, Abraham, Me and you!

And so the promise was secured, b&s, and now the seed is no longer in Genesis 22, the sand of the sea, but in verse 17, it's the stars of the heaven. The stars of the heaven, now we see the heavenly origin of it all; now we know how it's all going to be done, b&s, flesh is going to be crucified and therefore, when the seed died according to the flesh, Paul says, 'we don't know him anymore by that, he says, 'although we've known Christ after the flesh, we don't know Him anymore like that. He's changed, He's the Son of God now in every sense, not only mentally and morally, b&s, but He's physically now the Son of God. We don't know Him anymore, He's like the stars of the heaven, not like the dust of the earth; and He's going to possess the gate of His enemies, isn't He? Now we know that the gate represents the judiciary, but as I pointed out before, b&s, the gate represented the whole city, the market was there; the judiciary was there, there kings met ambassadors, there the women went down to speak, there men met there together, it was the general concourse of the people, therefore, to talk about a gate, it was to talk about a whole city. And it's an incredible thing that Samson lived about there, and he had gone down there to Gaza, and when he took the gates of Gaza on his shoulders, instead of walking there he walked there, and the record says 'he took the gate of Gaza on his shoulder, and he went after midnight, early as the morning, pulled the gates off and walked up the Shephelah, right up to the highest point of the range of the Judean hills to Hebron. What on earth is Abraham doing over there? he lives up here; and there's no other record in Samson's life about Hebron at all, before or after. And you've only got to picture that man, b&s, in the gloom of the night, ripping the doors out of their sockets and Gaza means 'the fortress', and here was a man if ever there was one who was in a fortress of sin, without eyes, and he tore that gate out of the wall and he walked up the hill and as he would have done so, the sun would have risen from over Gilead, wouldn't it? and as it came up over the escarpment of Gilead and turned the Dead Sea pink, it would blush the top of the Judean hills, and if you were behind him, you'd see this enormous creature with this great gate standing like that in the blazing sun, b&s, towards Hebron, Abraham's city. 'He shall possess the gate of His enemies', why on earth and for what other reason would Samson do that as he went towards there? he didn't live there, he lived there. And there was a wonderful promise which he obviously saw!

So the promise takes a turn now; verse 18, 'And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed'. Abraham was told right at the beginning, he knew 'in thee' because it was! because Isaac was in his loins; but now Isaac's not in his loins, he's standing on the earth in his own right. Now he represents God's Son, so was Abraham, 'in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed', and we're blessed, b&s, because we're in Christ.

So Abraham returned unto his young men, young men? more than one now! One young man made a lot of other young men, 'and they rose and went together'; that's how he went with his one young man, didn't he? So a father went to the cross together with one young man, and walked away hand in hand with a whole lot of young men. That's interesting, isn't it? Isn't that marvellous, b&s? In the kingdom of God, hand in hand with

the Father, because of the Son, and he went towards Beer-sheba, the well of the oath.

And we conclude our studies by just reviewing Beer-sheba. In three ways, it was there that God opened the eyes of natural Israel, it was there that God made a covenant with the Gentiles, and it was there that Isaac established a well of living water, and it's towards there, b&s, that even before Isaac had done that, it's towards there that Abraham went with his seed, to make a covenant with God. And here we are! It's a marvellous story, b&s, and we pray God that every one of us, would have been impressed with the wonders of that story, and the marvellous principles that come out of it. And if we never go away with anything else, let us go away, thinking deeply about the relationship of the two fathers and the two sons, and how that God responded, GOD, b&s, God responded to a father's love for his son. Not difficult, b&s, to us to respond to His love, is it? Surely it's not difficult, not only because it ought to be done, but because God Himself did it; 'because you have done this thing'. And may it be that because He has done His thing, b&s, that we'll walk together with Him, to Beer-sheba!