

“Christ the True and Better Son”  
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December 10, 2023

**Main Idea:** Jesus the Anointed One fills out the redemptive patterns (or “types”) in Genesis 22, revealing that our salvation rests on Jesus’s perfect, lifelong, patient, vicarious obedience to the point of death a cross and on his vindicating resurrection from the dead.

I. Preparation

- A. **(SLIDE 1)** Everything we need to know for salvation is clearly and sufficiently stated in God’s Word.
- B. The truth of God’s Word is simple but rich, not simplistic.
- C. Typological interpretation brings out the richness of the simple truth of the good news about God’s Son, Jesus.
- D. **(SLIDE 2)** Isaac “fits” into the pattern (type) of the Anointed One in many ways, yet he also fits into the pattern (type) of his sinful forefathers.
- E. Genesis 22 gives us a complex pattern for thinking about Isaac’s role in the many patterns (types) that point to **Jesus’s perfect, lifelong, patient, vicarious obedience to the point of death on a cross and also to his vindicating resurrection from the dead.**

II. Reading of Genesis 22:1–19 (ESV) **(SLIDES 3–7)**

III. Exposition of Genesis 22:1–19

- A. **(SLIDE 8)** “After these things . . .” (v. 1). Context!
  1. **(SLIDE 9)** God’s everlasting covenant with Abraham occurs within the context of his first promise of the Redeemer, the “Offspring” of the woman who will defeat the serpent, in Gen 3:15.
  2. **(SLIDE 10)** Galatians 3:16: Paul recognizes that the “offspring” promised to Abraham is primarily this arch-Offspring—“the Anointed One”—who is Jesus.
  3. The context of the everlasting covenant with Abraham—the next great installment in the covenant of grace—helps us to make sense of details in Gen 22.
- B. **(SLIDE 11)** “God tested Abraham” (v. 1).
  1. The test is **not** about qualifying Abraham to receive the covenant promises.
  2. The test is **not** about God learning something new (cf. v. 12).
  3. The test is about displaying the quality of Abraham’s faith and the role of obedience in the covenant of grace.
    - a) More about Abraham’s resurrection-faith below.
    - b) More about the covenant promises being enhanced as Abraham obeys God through this test (vv. 12, 15–18) below.
- C. The passage is mostly about Abraham, not Isaac.

- D. **(SLIDE 12)** “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (v. 2).
1. Note the dramatic tension (even more dramatic in the Hebrew word order): your son—your only son whom you love—Isaac.
  2. Isaac is identified as Abraham’s “son” 13 times in these 19 verses the .
  3. The burnt offering or “ascension offering” points back to the covenant that God made with Noah (cf. Gen 8.20).
  4. The horror of God’s command has caused many to wonder about the morality of the passage.
  5. Remember that God is not giving Abraham this test because he is unsure about Abraham; again, God is **revealing** something to Abraham, to Isaac, and to us about the quality of Abraham’s faith and the role of obedience in the covenant of grace.
    - a) **(SLIDE 13)** As when God invites Abraham to intercede for Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:17–19), God is asking Abraham to enter into God’s way of seeing things: dealing with sin and restoring the world will eventually require the death of the beloved Son.
    - b) **(SLIDE 14)** Abraham is going to get a glimpse of John 3:16!
  6. No one will ever be commanded to do what Abraham was commanded to do; this is not an “exemplary” passage.
    - a) There’s no “go and do likewise.”
    - b) This was a once-for-all, non-repeatable episode in covenantal history (like the crucifixion of Jesus).
- E. Verses 3–4 emphasize Abraham’s deliberate planning and resolute obedience.
- F. “I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you” (v. 5).
1. Abraham knows that he is commanded to slaughter Isaac, yet he tells the servants that they are both coming back. Is he lying? No.
  2. **(SLIDE 15)** Hebrews 11:17–19: Abraham’s faith was a resurrection-faith. He may not have known how things would play out, but he knew that God would remain faithful to the covenant.
  3. The argument of Romans 4, which focuses on Isaac’s miraculous birth, is similar: Abraham trusted that the living God could give life, even bringing the dead back to life. Abraham’s faith is “of a piece” with our faith.
- G. Verse 6 brings in more dramatic tension and also reveals that Isaac, who carries the wood up the mountain, is not a little boy.
- H. **(SLIDE 16)** “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (v. 7),
1. Isaac’s question reveals that he doesn’t quite understand what is happening (unlike many early retellings of this story).
  2. We are put in a position to sympathize with Isaac.
- I. “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son” (v. 8).
1. Again, is Abraham lying to Isaac? No.

2. Abraham is sure that God will find a way to preserve/resurrect this promised offspring.
- J. Verses 9–11 are the narrative climax where the tension is highest.
1. The binding of Isaac suggests that he is old enough to resist and that Isaac might not be as willing as we imagine him to be (a contrast with Jesus).
- K. “Now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me” (v. 12)
1. Again, God has not learned something new; he has displayed something on the “stage of history” (Waltke).
  2. The fear of God is an important part of the covenant: it points to a willingness to submit one’s will to God’s will (Matt 6:10; 26:42) and is a mark of God’s true children.
  3. Abraham has given Isaac back to God; Isaac belongs to God. This is important for the development of patterns (typology) below.
- L. **(SLIDE 17)** “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” (v. 13).
1. The ram is offer “instead of” Isaac. The ram is a “substitute.”
    - a) This substitution underlies the later symbolism of Israel’s sacrificial system. The language of Gen 22 is similar to the language of Leviticus 8–9 (ordination of priests) and 16 (the day of atonement) (Hamilton).
    - b) This substitution in Gen 22, along with the sacrificial system, points to the person and work of Jesus (more below).
    - c) Do not listen to the voices that say the Bible does not teach about Jesus’s substitutionary death for sinners, etc. They are deliberately suppressing a central truth.
  2. Typologically speaking, at this point in history, the ram points to Jesus more directly than Isaac does.
    - a) Galatians 3:16, 29; 4:28.
    - b) Isaac is a son of Abraham not just because he was born from Sarah but even more importantly because Abraham had faith in God’s promise to bring the true Son.
      - (1) **(SLIDE 18)** Matthew 3:9 (ESV): “And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.”
    - c) We, like Isaac, are children of Abraham through faith in that same promise, the promise of the true Son, the substitute who would die on our behalf and secure our blessedness—the Anointed One, Jesus.
- M. Verses 14 is the confirmation of what Abraham had told Isaac in v. 8.
- N. **(SLIDE 19)** Verses 15–18 show the intensification and enhancement of the covenant promise based on Abraham’s obedience.
1. The covenant of grace is not an “anything goes” arrangement.
  2. We are not just given salvation and then let loose to do whatever feels best to us.

3. We are called into relationship with God so that we will reflect his character. Obedience is the appropriate response of the members of this covenant—not just in Abraham’s day but also in our own.
4. Although our salvation comes to us entirely by grace and through faith, as Isaac’s salvation came to him when he was passively going along with his father, still grace obligates us to be gracious. Receiving blessing obligates us to bless God and be a blessing to others.
5. **(SLIDE 20)** Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV): “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

#### IV. The Good News of Jesus the Anointed One

- A. Types (patterns) pointing directly to Jesus: Abraham the obedient servant of God and the ram as the substitute to deliver Isaac
  1. In this episode, Isaac seems to inhabit a pattern that points more directly to God’s redeemed people.
- B. God’s Son took on true humanity so that he could enter into the place of sinners as a substitute.
- C. His whole life leading up to the crucifixion is a life of humiliation on our behalf—a “vicarious” humiliation.
  1. He is “the beloved Son”—in our place and on our behalf—from his birth and childhood (Matt 1–2), from the beginning of his ministry (3:13–4:11), and climactically in his work at the cross (26:63–64; 27:40, 43, 54; cf. 16:13–23; 17:1–9) and in the resurrection (28:18–19).
  2. **(SLIDE 21)** Romans 8:32 (ESV): “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?”
- D. It is not only Jesus’s death that saves us; his whole life of obedience leading up to and confirmed in that willing death on a cross is part of what older theologians called “satisfaction,” Jesus’s accomplishment of all that was necessary to deal with our sins and give us the right to blessed life with God.
- E. Jesus fills out what is lacking or unclear in all the former types.
  1. Unlike the unwitting Isaac and the ram caught in the thicket, Jesus was completely aware of and committed to his mission to seek and save the lost.
  2. Unlike Abraham and Isaac, Jesus had no sins that required him to make satisfaction for himself. Therefore, Jesus’s perfect obedience as the God-Man is not only good for himself but also for others (Mastricht).
- F. Isaac is figuratively raised from the dead because of someone else’s obedience. That’s like us, who have Jesus’s obedience reckoned to us (Rom 5:19). Jesus was raised from the dead and exalted because of his own obedience (Phil 2:6–11, esp. vv. 8–9), and he passes on the rewards of his obedience to all those who are made children of Abraham through faith (Gal 3–4; Rom 4).

V. **(SLIDE 22)** Questions for Application

- A. Have you embraced Jesus the Anointed One with full trust in his accomplishing everything needed to deal with your sins?
- B. How is your knowledge of Jesus's person and work enriched by God's revelation in the Old Testament? What do we gain from looking at redemptive patterns (typological interpretation), in particular?
  - 1. Don't let a "replacement" theology creep into your thinking.
  - 2. The Old Testament is primarily about God's redemptive works that are centered on and lead up to the person and work of Jesus.
  - 3. The Old Testament is valuable for many reasons, and one of them is to show us new facets of the redemption accomplished by Jesus.
  - 4. Typological interpretation show the preeminence of Jesus, the Son of God, the Anointed One—that he is worthy of all your worship and honor and praise, together with the Father and the Spirit.
- C. Can you distinguish between examples for conduct and once-for-all events in Scripture? Do you understand that God's command to Abraham is not a repeatable command for anyone else to follow?
  - 1. Most distorted interpretations of Gen 22 start with the assumption that Scripture's purpose is to furnish us with examples of moral behavior in all instances.
  - 2. God is not revealing here what is "moral" (what we should and should not do) but rather what is necessary in his own loving, steadfast commitment to overcome sin and its effects in the world.
- D. How should you understand your obedience (and disobedience) in relation to salvation by grace and through faith?
  - 1. "Justification is by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone. . . . Faith alone justifies but a justified person with faith alone would be a monstrosity which never exists in the kingdom of grace. Faith works itself out through love (cf. Gal. 5:6). And faith without works is dead (cf. James 2:17–20). It is living faith that justifies and living faith unites to Christ both in the virtue of his death and in the power of his resurrection. No one has entrusted himself to Christ for deliverance from the guilt of sin who has not also entrusted himself to him for deliverance from the power of sin" (Murray).
- E. What gifts of God have I been valuing more than God himself?
- F. What comfort should we find in Jesus's perfect, lifelong, patient, vicarious obedience to the point of death in our place on a cross and in his resurrection from the dead?
  - 1. His obedience and righteousness—all of it, throughout his whole life—is reckoned as ours.
  - 2. Our failures are covered by his success.
  - 3. We are united to him who was humiliated but is now exalted; we can have all assurance that he is with us in our suffering now and will lead to our glory with him forever.