

## PSALM 22 AND ISAIAH 53 -- A DIVINE DIALOG?

In the story of Abraham offering Isaac one most interesting part of the story appears to be missing . Abraham, about a hundred and twenty five years old, has brought Isaac, who is about twenty five at the time (according to Josephus), to the foot of a mountain. There the young men accompanying them are left behind and just these two godly men ascend the mountain together (Gen. 22:5). Isaac is aware that the purpose of the trip is to offer a burnt offering to the Lord, but he is puzzled at the omission of an animal for the sacrifice. They have been walking for three days on this journey and Abraham has not yet said a thing about it. Finally Isaac can contain his curiosity no longer. Turning to Abraham he asks, "My father! Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7).

The answer of the patriarch is filled with faith, but short on information. "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" is his cryptic reply (Gen. 22:8).

Somewhere between this and the time Isaac finds himself bound on the altar he had to be told that he was to be that lamb. We are not allowed to listen in on this hallowed conversation, but we can be sure he must have been given a satisfactory reason why he should be the sacrifice, for he submitted willingly to the place on the altar. It is very evident that he was willing, for there would be no way that aged Abraham could have even caught young Isaac, much less bound him on the altar, unless he had been willing.

Abraham was willing to offer Isaac -- knowing that if he were slain God would have to raise him from the dead to fulfill His promise that he would have numerous descendents through Isaac (Heb. 11:17 - 19). We can only assume that Isaac, believing the same thing, submitted himself in faith as great as Abraham's. The typology which shines out so clearly from this chapter of Genesis almost demands that Isaac (picturing Christ) be a willing sacrifice.

Surely God the Father did not -- even back in eternity -- have to explain to God the Son that He was to be the Lamb of God, for the plan was as much His as His Father's. However, the divine logic behind the Cross may be brought home to our hearts if we can find it expressed anthropomorphically in terms of the conversation between Abraham and Isaac. Happily there are two passages of Scripture well adapted to this approach. In Psalm twenty two Christ Himself is describing His offering on the Cross -- the heart of the psalm is clearly biographical [it is His true humanity which is speaking here]. Isaiah fifty three, on the other hand, looks at that Cross from the Father's point of view. Isa. 52:13 - 15 and 53:11-b, 12 are God the Father, Himself, speaking, while the verses in between are Isaiah looking at this coming sacrifice from the Father's point of view.

By putting these glorious prophecies side by side we can see the divine thinking behind Calvary in terms (like the type set before us in Genesis) we can identify with. In the following suggestion of such a dialog the Son (speaking through Psalm twenty-two) will be in normal type and the Father (speaking from Isaiah) will be in *italics*.

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? 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 am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people."

*"Truly you are despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."*

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him: let Him deliver him seeing He delights in him.'"

***"You are indeed despised of men and they esteem you not."***

"Be not far from me for trouble is near and there is none to help. I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint: they pierced my hands and feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not Thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste Thee to help me."

***"All these people like sheep have gone astray, they have turned every one to his own way. But you are wounded for their transgressions, you are bruised for their iniquities: the penalty for their peace is upon you and with your stripes they are healed. I have laid on you the iniquity of them all. You shall be cut off out of the land of the living: for these people will you make your grave with the wicked and with rich in your death for you have done no violence, neither has any deceit been in your mouth. Yet it has pleased me to bruise you. I have put you to grief, for I am making your soul an offering for sin."***

"Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog."

***"You shall see of the travail of your soul and shall be satisfied. By knowledge of you, my Righteous Servant, you shall justify many for you shall bear their iniquities. Therefore you will be exalted and be very high. I will divide you a portion with the great. Because you have poured out your soul unto death and have born the sin of many and have prayed for the transgressors."***

"I will declare your name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee. In the great congregation a seed shall serve me. It shall be accounted to me as children and they shall declare my righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that I have done this."

(Speaking to men) ***"Kiss the Son lest He be angry and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him. This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; hear Him!"***

(The dialog is somewhat paraphrased from Psa. 22; Isa. 53; Psa. 2:12; John 3:36; Matt. 17:5)

--- William P. Heath

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(Incorporated into Class Notes on Genesis as Appendix # 3 -- "clasnot\oltestmt\genesisf.sam")