

## 'What's in a word? - The Faith of Yeshua':

Turn to Genesis 22:12

*And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*

I would like to revisit the story of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Firstly, while many translations may use the word 'boy' or 'lad' to describe Isaac, the Bible does not appear to tell us how old he was at the time. The Hebrew word na'ar (5288) can mean a boy but also a youth or young man. Some argue he was probably 25-30. Many Rabbinic sources argue for 37 based on their contention that his mother, Sarah died immediately after this event (she was 127 and gave birth to Isaac at 90).

Certainly, it seems a fair assumption that he was at least a teenager. Thus, he was old enough to question his father and to demonstrate his own strength of faith in submitting to be bound and placed on the altar.

This story has many parallels with Yeshua's sacrifice:

In Abraham's story we have a Father and a Son – Abraham & Isaac.	In Yeshua' story we have a Father (God Almighty) and a Son (Yeshua).
"Take your son, your <i>only son</i> , Isaac" (Gen 22:2);	"For God so loved the world that He gave <i>His one and only Son</i> . . ." <i>Jn 3:16</i>
"Go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there. . ." (Gen 22:2)	it is believed that this area is where the city of Jerusalem was built many years later, where Yeshua was crucified outside its city walls (Hebrews 13:12).
"Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering" (Gen 22.2)	"Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3)
"Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac" (Gen 22:6)	Yeshua, "Carrying his own cross. . ." (John 19:17).
"but where is the <i>lamb</i> for the burnt offering?" (Gen 22:7)	John said, "Look, the <i>Lamb of God</i> , who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)
• Isaac, the son, acted in <i>obedience</i> to his father in becoming the sacrifice (Gen 22:9)	Yeshua prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. <i>Yet not as I will, but as you will</i> " (Matthew 26:39)
<u>Resurrection – Isaac figuratively</u> "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)	<u>Resurrection - Yeshua in reality</u> Yeshua, "that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4)

Abraham, had such faith in God that he believed that when he sacrificed his 'only' Son (only, in the sense that he was the son of a promise, unlike Ishmael who was the son of the worldly approach – the son of a Bondswoman' or slave – the son of a lack of faith.).

Isaac was the son of a promise by God; just as Yeshua was the Son of a repeated promise starting in Gen 3:15, in Deut 18:18, etc. We may be called 'son's of God or 'adopted sons/daughters' and 'brothers/sisters' of Yeshua, but only Yeshua was declared 'The' son of god (that is, the eschatological Messiah that was keenly awaited) by the Almighty through Yochanan (John) the Baptist: "... *And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.*" Jn 1:34

It was also through Isaac that God had promised Abraham all the land he could see from the Mountains of Israel.

The Lord said, "*Arise, walk in the Land ...for I give it to you.*" (Genesis 13:17)

The boundaries of the Land promised to Abraham include all of modern day Israel, the disputed territories and much more. This promise was unconditional.

In Abraham's time a contract or covenant was agreed to, not by a handshake or signature, but by the sacrifice of animals. These animals were cut in two and the two halves separated on the ground – both parties to the contract would then walk between the two parts of the animal or animals, signifying their agreement and that if they broke the agreement they would be liable to the same fate as the sacrificed animals.

In Gen 15:9 we see Abraham take a heifer, goat, ram, turtle dove and pigeon. The heifer, ram, & goat are cut in two –but only 'God'- actually a representation of God - passes between them, not Abram – therefore only God guarantees covenant – Abram/Abraham can not affect this permanent promise.

*"...the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying ... 'To your descendants I have given this Land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates .... ", (Genesis 15:18)*

Abraham had seven sons in addition to Isaac (Genesis 16:15; 25:1-2), but the covenant was established with Isaac. Before the birth of Isaac, Abraham asked the Lord to give the promise to Ishmael, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" (Genesis 17:18)

The Lord had other plans. He said to Abraham, *"...No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him."* (Genesis 17:19)

This promise was expanded through the Messiah to include the whole earth – see for example Dan 7 and Zech 9:10.

All this through Isaac, not Ishmael and yet here Abraham was being asked to kill Isaac before he was even married and had conceived any children!

Just as Abraham, the 'Father of the faith' had great faith in God, Isaac also had great faith in His Father – as a teenager or grown man, he allowed his father to tie him up and place him on the altar.

Equally, Yeshua also had great faith in His Father, when he willingly allowed himself to be taken to his sacrificial altar. Yeshua like Abraham and Isaac, was greatly tested – he sweated so much that it was like drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). Yeshua prayed that 'if it were possible' he could be spared the coming crucifixion, but yet accepted with great faith, God's way – he said 'not what I will, but what you will'. Just as he had taught the disciples in the so called Lord's Prayer 'Thy will be done'.

Consider the parallel – Abram & Isaac /God the Father & Yeshua.

Yeshua' faith was in God the Father as was Abraham's. This is perhaps why we read predominately of the 'faith of Abraham' rather than 'the faith of Isaac'.

So we see in Gen 22:12 a foretaste of the sacrifice of Yeshua. While, Abraham was stopped from going through with the sacrifice of his 'only Son', God had seen the faith that Abraham and Isaac had. Paul tells us that Abraham's great faith was credited to him as righteousness. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Abraham had such trust in God that he expected God to resurrect his son Isaac if he did sacrifice him. (Hebrews 11:17-19)

The Gospel or 'Good News' that followers of Yeshua are to believe is the virtually the same 'Good News' Abraham believed. It is "the Good News of the Kingdom" that Yeshua himself believed in. It is Yeshua mission statement (Luke 4:43). His purpose – what the main reason for his ministry was.

Take out your translation and read Romans 3:26. You will probably read in Romans 3:26 that God will justify the believer "who has faith **in** Yeshua".

However, this phrase literally rendered is that God will justify the one "**who is of the faith of Yeshua.**"

This phrase is found in the next chapter where Paul speaks of "the faith of Abraham" (Rom. 4:16).

It is the same Greek construction. (*Rom 4:16 ek pistis abraam* (direct translation = *of faith Abraam*) compared to *Roms 3:26 ek pistis Iesous – i.e. Yeshua*) (direct translation = *of faith Yeshua.*)

There is no reason, other than the theological bias of the translators, to translate one instance as "the faith of Abraham" and the other as "faith in Yeshua." Yeshua had Abraham's faith, that is, faith in the same promises of God.

Both Darby's and Young's Literal translations use '*faith of Yeshua*'.

This phrase, "the faith of Yeshua," is often obscured in our English Bibles, even though this is how the Greek text states it. Romans 3:22 is normally translated: "the righteousness of God through faith in Yeshua Messiah [is] for all those who believe." It is more accurately translated: "*the righteousness of God through the faith of Yeshua the Messiah*" (which is how the KJV translates it).

*KJV: Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is **by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference*

Thus, we are to have the faith of Yeshua, the faith he lived by. There can be no faith in (or better: *trust in*) Yeshua if we do not have the faith of Yeshua, the faith he lived by, the faith he modelled, the faith he taught. 'Faith in Yeshua' is not diminished by this understanding but it helps us focus on the Message of the Messiah.

The practical implication is significant. What is the faith that brings righteousness before God the Father?

It is the faith of Messiah Yeshua. What faith was this? Faith in his Father's promise given to Abraham, that God would raise the righteous dead and bring them into a Kingdom of glory through His Anointed King.

See Matthew 25:31, where the faithful are invited to enter or inherit the Kingdom "*when the Son of Man comes in His Glory and sits on His glorious throne*".

That is, faith in the promised eschatological Kingdom. That is the coming physical Kingdom of God, not the present spiritual manifestation of this Kingdom in the hearts of believers, but a real time in the future after the return of Messiah Yeshua.

Who will live in the Coming Age with Yeshua?

His brothers and sisters. Who are his brothers and sisters?

Yeshua answered this in Luke 8:21 "... *my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it*". (Also Matt 12:50 "*For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.*" & Mark 3:35).

That is, those who have the faith of Yeshua.

This is the "faith of Yeshua."

What is the steadfastness of the true believer, but to "keep the commandments" of God and to keep "the faith of Yeshua".

*NKJV: Rev 14:12 "Here is the patience of the saints: here are those who **keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Yeshua.**"*

There is no way to have **trust in** Yeshua except to believe what Yeshua believed, that is, to have the faith **of** Yeshua.

To believe in Yeshua is to believe his word or Gospel announcement. Thus the only way to express the true faith of Yeshua the Messiah is to live according to the faith he walked by and was motivated by. Yeshua's faith in God's word of promise becomes our faith in the same Gospel promise. The only way to be righteous before the Father is to trust His Son, i.e. to believe the Good News of the coming Kingdom of God he believed in, and to believe that Messiah Yeshua atoned for our sin so that we are not prevented by our sin from entering the Coming Age. This is to believe in Yeshua. This is to be of Abraham's faith, to be a true son/daughter of God.

**Let us hold fast to the faith of Yeshua – let us trust Yeshua - let us cling to the solid expectation of the future Coming Age – the time when death will be conquered, when sin will be removed, when tears of suffering will be no more, when God's justice will be done and we will walk on a renewed, redeemed, restored Earth with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.**

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June 2006

[I am indebted to Frank Selch, Greg Deuble & Anthony Buzzard for the ideas presented here.]

#### Aside:

*It is interesting to reflect on some Rabbinical and Jewish commentaries on the event of the offer of Issac. In the quote/example below, you will see that the Jewish writer is confused as to why the Matriarch Sarah's death is not given greater preference over both the binding of Issac and the buying of the plot of land.*

*"So central and powerful is the akeidah experience in the Jewish religious and national conscience that the attempted sacrifice is recalled in many a prayer. The incident has been turned to by grieving parents throughout the Jewish Nation's trials. References can be found to the ashes of the sacrificed Isaac in the High Holiday liturgy, as well as in the Talmud. What ashes? Abraham offered no more than his willingness to offer his son, and a God-given ram! Hardly a great sacrifice, and far less than the realities that have befallen the Jewish people countless times since. On the other hand, Sarah the Matriarch's real death appears to fade into insignificance amid haggling over the field of Machpelah.*

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*As already discussed, thanks to the arrival of the Messiah and the NT scriptures we now understand the significance of Abraham's offering and also we read in Hebrew's that Abraham had not possessed the land promised to him during his lifetime. We know that he only owned the small piece of land in which he buried Sarah. Thus, we see that the promise of God to Abraham is still unfulfilled. It is the promise of the Coming Age! Thus we can see what the Jewish writers who have not recognized their Messiah can't see. We can see the primary significance of these events over the death of the Matriarch.*

Footnote:

*There are about 8-9 verses which are translated as 'faith in Messiah' in most translations. It appears that most, but not all of these should read 'faith of Messiah'.*

**Acts 24:24** εις χριστον πιστεως translated to Messiah of faith

Gal 2:16 εκ πιστεως χριστου translated from faith Messiah KJV: by the faith of Messiah

Gal 3:16 πιστεως εν χριστω ιησου translated 'faith in Messiah Yeshua'

Phil 3:9 KJV: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Messiah, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

πιστεως χριστου την εκ θεου translated faith Messiah from god

Col 1:4 KJV: Since we heard of your faith in Messiah Yeshua, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

Col 2:5 YLT: for if even in the flesh I am absent -- yet in the spirit I am with you, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in regard to Messiah;

εις χριστον πιστεως translated to Messiah of faith

2 Tim 3:15 KJV: And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yeshua.