

ABRAHAM AND MOUNT MORIAH

(Bro. Bakht Singh – Balance of Truth July, Aug 1957)

On the precious occasion we noticed how God has taken His chosen saints and savants at different times to mountain tops that He might reveal His plan for them. It is good to study each of such cases individually and we shall begin spending some time on Mount Moriah.

We read from the word of God that God first appeared to Abraham in Gen 12. But he took him on Mount Moraiah about 46 years later. God had to take Abraham through many different experiences during those 46 years, before he was ready to come on Mount Moriah. Whenever we desire to get a mountain-top experience of the power of grace of God, then we must be prepared to go through the many experiences by which God in His perfect wisdom prepares His children. It may not be necessary for everyone to go through such experiences for 46 years, but you will find that certain periods of such experiences from God are necessary. Even though we may read the Bible prayerfully and carefully every day, even though we may have the privilege to attend Bible Studies by the best teachers available, and also the privilege of fellowship with the saints of God in a living assembly, and also the privilege of having had spiritual parents, yet you can see that for your spiritual education and maturity there is a time factor. God has a plan which may extend over a period of less years or more. Whatever it may be, it is very necessary to pas through these painful and trying experiences, in order to be prepared for the Mountain of God.

We know God had planned from eternity to make Abraham His friend. In Isaiah 41:8 God calls him "Abraham my friend", but for Abraham to be the friend of God, he had to be prepared that he might be able to enjoy the friendship of God. Mount Moriah might also be called the Mount of God's friendship. Down the 46 years God had been preparing Abraham step by step to make him His friend. In every human heart is the longing to have a friend. Small children at the age of one or two show their desire to have a companion or friend, because of that inward longing. In your school days also each one had his own special friend. Again in college there are special friends, and in later life it is a peculiar joy to meet old school and college friends.

Recently I passed through Calcutta and there I met a very old friend of mine whom I have not seen for 31 years. He never knew where I was even though we had been thick friends in college days. But somehow when I went to England, we lost touch, but a few months ago he saw my name in the news paper and wrote to me. So we began to correspond, and some weeks ago I visited him in Calcutta, and what joy it was to see him and the whole family. He called his wife and children to meet me his old friend, and I had the great joy of giving them the gospel for two hours. This illustrates my point that in the heart of every man there is a longing to have a friend. But it is not very easy to have good friends, and that is why many are disappointed. Some have been friends for two or three years and I am sure that there are many here that have been sadly disappointed because of broken friendship. But here God was speaking to Abraham as His true friend.

If you want to have a real true friend in your life, or to be a real true friend to others, first learn to cultivate real friendship with the living Saviour, and you will find out as you begin to grow in the friendship of the Lord Jesus Christ that God will give you many many loving friends everywhere. Before that, you may have spent your money on certain friends, and have wasted much affection and, in order to show your friendship, have written very long letters. You may even have sat up at night and exhausted all your vocabulary to show your affection, yet when the reply came after three or four days and when you opened it with trembling hands, and found nothing but a few formal lines, thanking you for your letter, and apologizing for the delay in replying, your whole face fell down, and after seeing it you had no desire to eat or drink. That is human nature. When, however, you have learned by experience to be the friend of God you will see that He Himself will give you most loving friends who will give you love unspeakable. Whenever our Lord was trying to show His great love to His disciples, and the disciples were feeling very very sad because the Lord had told them in a very plain way how He was going to be betrayed and crucified, and they were all feeling downcast, they did not know even what to say, and as they walked in the dark night in the small path leading to Gethsemane, our Lord began to say something and those words are found in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, and during that time He said, "Henceforth, I call you not servants but friends" They thought they were being left alone and forsaken, but He said, "All things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you."

Servants cannot understand anything about the master. But a friend can, and that is how you know divine friendship. God was trying to show the very same friendship to Abraham. Gen. 18:17. What a wonder this is! God had every right to do what He wished. God's time had come to judge the inhabitants of those wicked cities called Sodom and Gomorrah and He was about to do so. But He said: "How can I hide it from Abraham?" Abraham was not saying: "Oh God! You must tell me everything," because he had not yet understood the heart of God for him. No doubt he had been obeying God as far as he could, but so far he had not entered into the heart of God. Now God was saying about him: "How can I hide my counsel from Abraham?" This is God's purpose also for you and me and we are redeemed and purchased and washed and cleansed by His blood. We are not cleansed and washed to live as we like. No, we have been called to be friends of God the most high and living God. God wants you to climb that Mountain of Friendship and then you will know how God, as your friend, reveals and shows you many many truths and mysteries. If you are really a child of God and if you are truly born-again, then in your heart will be a great longing to know the Bible. This was my longing, and I went on reading the Bible sometimes 12 to 14 hours a day. But that did not solve my problem. Bible knowledge itself does not satisfy your hunger. Similarly I thought that by spending many hours in prayer I would be satisfied. I tried that too and whenever and wherever possible I spent hours in prayers, but even there I could see defeat in my life. Then I began to long for some miracles in life and through prayer and by God's grace, I have seen many miracles also. But even that did not satisfy me, till I learned God's purpose to make me His friend, and how to enter pure friendship with the holy, just, mighty and great God? Now God Himself began to speak to me and told me things which I could not learn from any man, in other words how to be God's co-labourer and partner and friend. Thus we see from the life of Abraham, how we can climb the mountain top of friendship with the Lord.

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Let us consider a few points about the friendship of God with Abraham.

Gen. 22:1. First of all God tempted Abraham, i.e. He proved or tested him. Now if you want to climb the mountain or if you want to enjoy the friendship of God, then be prepared to be proved and tried by God's own testings. Suppose a watch maker wants to use a piece of steel for a watch spring, he has to put the steel through many tests before using it. Only the watchmaker can know what kind of

spring is required for the watch. In the same way if men are going to use any metal for an aero plane that piece of metal is going to be first proved by many tests. It is only then that the metal will be fit for use in the aero plane. In the same way God, who only knows our real ministry on earth in heaven, has to apply every kind of test in our lives that we may be found fit worthy. We as believers should never question or doubt God, demanding of Him as to why this has happened and why that? Believe me, every test, however severe, is very necessary to one who desires to be a friend of God. Some of the tests are very painful, and the Enemy will try to suggest that you are being punished by God for failure in the past. If, however, you have understood God's purpose, then remember you are forgiven completely, and when you have confessed your sins and have put things right with God and man, then your sins are forgiven, covered and washed. His grace will never dig them up again. Your part is to be faithful and sincere in your repentance and confession, and obey God, putting all things right, with your fellowmen. Afterwards let God try and prove you by any test. The saints of God, all down the world's history, have been proved in different ways, and were found faithful. We read that, when God called Abraham on Mount Moriah, he said, "Behold here am I!" He could not have said that so quickly at the beginning, but he had been prepared by God down these 46 years, till his ears had become sensitive to the voice of God. God spoke and he heard and responded immediately. He did not say "Lord give me five or ten minutes!" So many people hear God speaking in a meeting or in their quiet time or in prayer time, but they answer, "God! Please give me ten minutes, I will consult my darling wife and give you a definite reply. She is very good wife and the best woman in the whole world. Please God, just wait for a few minutes and I will ask her permission and then come." But Abraham is not saying, "Let me call Sarah and then I will come to you," for he has been truly prepared by God. In a subtle way the devil has deceived many of God's servants, and many teachers and believers. They bring some man, some woman, some relation between God and themselves. But the answer of Abraham is: "Behold, here am I", which means, "Oh God! I am fully ready and prepared. You tell me and I will do it." If you are not clear as to God's voice, then wait. Because in some case it takes a month or two months or more to know God's will. But when God has spoken and God has commanded you must say at once: "Behold, I am here." In Gen. 22:2 Abraham rose up early in the morning. Isaac was also the son of Sarah and no doubt his mother must have loved him more dearly than even Abraham did. But without consulting Sarah, Abraham was ready to take Isaac as God

had commanded. Some may say that the customs in India and America are different. You may say that American wives are different from Indian wives. They demand everything! – and to keep the peace men have to tell everything to their wives! It may be an American wife, or an English wife or an Indian wife or a graduate wife or an illiterate wife. But the divine law is the same for every country. In the work of God, and the things of God, it is the same divine law that is operative. If you make any alteration in any divine law, you will bring great weakness into your testimony and loss into your ministry. You could never say that Abraham did not love Sarah, or that Sarah did not love Abraham. Now when God came he came first to Abraham, but Abraham, however much he loved Sarah, had already learned better than to listen to his wife before obeying God. It was Sarah who advised him to go to Hagar, and without consulting God he had obeyed her, and the mistake of that day is now being seen and felt in the whole world in the seed of Ishmael. Divine laws are not to be trifled with, and Abraham had learned that lesson, - that when God speaks, He must be obeyed so, without consulting with any person, he obeyed God immediately. We must never try to change divine laws by human wisdom.

By God's command Abraham had to go on a journey (vs.4). On the third day he did not tell even Isaac what he was going to do. Even though he loved he commanded him, and we do not find the least anxiety in the heart of Abraham. Verse 7. When Isaac questioned him about the offering he said: "The Lord will provide." He is not avoiding Isaac's question. When he said that God would provide, he actually believed that the Lord would provide. Literally the meaning of Moriah is: "God will provide." In this story we see the kind of faith that had been created and developed in the heart of Abraham. The true friendship that God demands is a strong, living and simple faith, and alas! for most of us, we have no faith. Even though we talk about faith, and preach and sing about faith, when the test is actually given, we know how the devil again and again has brought some doubt into our hearts. Even though we have proved God on many occasions and He has given victory over the enemy's devices, we have seen how many times doubts still come into our hearts. We ask ourselves: What will happen tomorrow? We have prepared for only a thousand guests for Holy Convocation. Suddenly panic comes in. What about Wednesday? What about Thursday? And for a short time there will be panic and doubt. Then we remember that for the past ten years we have been having many convocations and every year God has not only met every need but also

allowed us never to keep any bill waiting for payment, nor have we refused anybody. God meets every need without hints of any kind. Even so at times we have known that for a few minutes a little doubt may come in, till the Lord reassures us with promise that He will surely provide.

In the same way we often find that when we are asked to give a message we feel so dry, empty and weak, the throat may be dry and the brains tired but even then He provides His message if we seek it and you will find the same way in every test; I know it in my own experience, He is faithful. I have seen some people very worried as their families increase. The very number eight paralyses them. They begin to wonder how they will clothe their children, or educate them, or who is going to marry them. Supposing they are girls, the problem is still worse. I am talking about believing parents, who are also God's servants, and yet in their lives is a fear all the same. Yet surely if God can provide for one, He can provide for ten children. Many rich parents do not have more than three children. Where is your faith? Whenever God blesses, He provides, and what-so-ever burden we as men may have to bear, He gives abundant grace extra for that burden. Abraham knew these words were spoken by God and not by man. That is why he was prepared to do as God told him. God said, "Take your son"! and he took him. He took wood also. Then God told him to build an altar, and he built it, without any question or doubt in his mind. That is real friendship with the mighty God. When God says, "Yes!", I say, "Yes," and when God says, "No!" I say "No" and when God says, "Go!", I go, and when He says, "Stay," I stay, and when He says, "Speak," I will speak. You find that such friendship will carry you up every mountain. Your sufferings are sufferings of trial, and trials and sufferings are all preparation.

In the first instance God told Abraham how He was going to judge Sodom and Gomorrah. But now God wanted to tell him what was going to happen through his seed, in blessing to all the nations of the earth. Verse 17. That seed is the Lord Jesus Christ and Abraham would thus be also a partaker of all blessings which were to come through that seed. He would enjoy the fruits of the victory of that seed over all the enemies of God, and over all the powers of darkness. We too have the right in Him to enjoy the fruits of His victory, which will ensure not only a happy life upon the earth, but a share of His triumphant victory over all the powers of darkness in heavenly places. That is what it means to be a friend of God.

Verse 13 reveals something further of what the friendship of God has for Abraham. The ram was caught in the thicket, not because it would run away somewhere. God could have made that very same ram to appear right before Abraham without being bound in a thicket. But God was teaching Abraham some important lessons. After he had passed the final test, he saw the ram caught in the bush. This ram is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. God was saying to Abraham, "You have obeyed my voice. Now I am bound for blessing to you and your seed. Now command Me. Continue to command Me. Concerning the work of My hands, 'command ye me'. God is willing to work in blessing for us if we obey Him. Most of us want God to listen to us and work for us. But we won't obey Him. The Lord Jesus has been bound for blessing to us that we may be able to command Him in the days to come; that we may command the blessing of God for all nations, and also victory over all enemies. God took Abraham on the mountain top; that Abraham might learn how to command the best things from God for all the generations to come. Have you a desire to climb that mountain of God's friendship? Do you want to be a friend of God? If you want to be a friend of God, you will find the whole secret revealed in the life of Abraham and especially in Genesis chapter 22.