

Abraham's Journey of Faith

By Tom Stephens

Because Of Jesus

If a man cannot see Jesus in each book, chapter, and verse of the Old Testament, it is my belief he has not yet received the full revelation of who Jesus really is, why He appeared to man in the flesh, why He readily gave Himself on the cross, why He was resurrected, and finally, the impact of His second coming, and eternity in Heaven.

Man will continue to exist. We know that. Heaven does not float around in our imagination. It is real—a land, a home to which sacred affections draw us. Divine assurance settles that fact. The Bible tells us it is a place with a definite location in contrast with our unsettled and temporary pilgrim state. Heaven is centered on Jesus Christ, who, in His glorified body, has a place assigned to Him—a high place.

Therefore, whenever we read/study the Old Testament, our focus should be in the revelation of Jesus and His mission from the Father to mankind. Not that we're constantly asking questions as much as how these questions actually bring to our hearts a true revelation from the Holy Spirit Himself of what these things mean for us.

Not Without Blood: What the Scriptures say:

“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, completing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:” (Heb. 9:6-8)

It is always the Word of the same God. We learn to recognize the place these truths actually occupy in revelation, or rather in the heart of God. Also, we begin to discover what the foundational truths of the Bible are which, above others, demand attention. Beginning at the gates of Eden, there is no single scriptural idea—from Genesis to Revelation—more prominent, than that expressed by the words, “the blood”.

Abel, a keeper of sheep, brought of the firstlings of his flock to the Lord as sacrifice, and in this first act of worship, it is recorded in the Bible blood was shed. (Genesis 4:4)

Then, in Hebrews 11:4, the writer said,

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

Abel's faith stands first in the record of those the Bible calls “believers”. The witness born to him was that he pleased God!

Noah, after he left the Ark, offered a burnt sacrifice to the Lord.

“Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark. And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.”

As with Abel, so Noah's new beginning was “not without blood”; and a new foundation was laid for the establishment of God's kingdom on the earth!

So truth through the Abrahamic Covenant included the death, burial and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. By the divine call, and miraculous birth of Isaac, God showed His plan for His people to serve Him.

Again, not without blood.

Hopefully we have learned that true surrender to God comes by death. Isaac then, must die. A ram has taken his place so Isaac would see resurrection. His descendants rallied around the proclamation “never without blood!”

There are three reasons why God did not allow the sacrifice of Isaac:

- 1) Abraham believed God, and had faith in His promise, the promise that he was to be the father of many nations.
- 2) Isaac would not have been resurrected unto life without an animal substitute.
- 3) Abraham would have no seed to become Israel. (Gen 22:13-18)

400 yrs later Isaac, in Egypt, becomes Israel, the people of God.

Again, not without blood. What the blood accomplished on Mt. Moriah for one person, the father of a nation, must now be experienced *by* that nation. The door frames must be sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal lamb, by the institution of the Passover as an enduring ordinance with the words:

When I see the blood, I will pass over you.

The people were taught that life can be obtained only by the death of a substitute. Life was possible only through the blood given in their place, and appropriated by the sprinkling of that blood. Fifty days later this lesson was enforced in a striking manner; for Israel had reached Sinai. God had given His law as the foundation of His covenant; and that covenant must now be established, but as it is expressly stated in Hebrews 9:7, not without blood.

The sacrificial blood must be sprinkled first on the altar, and then on the book of the covenant, representing God’s side of that covenant; then on the people, with the declaration that this is the blood of the covenant (Exodus 24:8).

There is a marked difference between the *manner* of applying the blood in the former cases as compared with the latter. On Moriah the life was redeemed by the shedding of the blood. In Egypt, it was sprinkled on the door posts of the houses; but at Sinai, it was sprinkled on the people themselves. The closer the contact, the more powerful the application’s effectiveness.

Immediately after the establishment of the covenant, the command was given:

Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them (Exodus 25:8).

They were to enjoy the full blessings of having the Lord of the Covenant abiding with them. The blood in the Tabernacle is the center of the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place where God Himself dwells. Again, not without blood; and Jesus is that substitute—if man desires to approach Him. Every New Testament Book teaches about the blood. Salvation can never take place without the blood. . . ***Never!***

- **Heaven Is Real:** It’s Jesus’ place of Honor.

Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places!

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” (Ephesians 1:17-23)

Indicating the very highest of honor!

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” (Hebrews 1:1-4)

Jesus' place in God's kingdom.

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” (1 Peter 3:21, 22)

Christ's exaltation by the Father:

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:22-24)

- **The Marriage Supper Of The Lamb:**

Earth is unstable, insecure, and fleeting:

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 13:12-14)

Abraham's revelation from God of an eternal city:

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Hebrews 11:8-10)

Heaven is inside, hell outside:

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” (Revelation 22:14-16)

“I go to prepare a place for you.”

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3)

“That where I am, there ye may be also.”

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” (John 14:3-4)

John’s picture of comfort and strength.

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7:9-17)

Concerning John’s Conversation With One Of The Elders . . .

These saints—saved during the tribulation period—are those who were martyred because of their decision for Christ. In the above passage, Apostle John, who is also qualified as an elder, was in heaven having a conversation with one of the elders present before the throne. John and this elder were only two of a multitude of resurrected saints raptured just prior to the revealing of the antichrist—they were therefore not a part of this huge body of new believers. Their conversation concerned another, totally separate group who failed to accept Christ during the Church age; but made a *forced* decision for Christ only after measuring Christ’s value in the face of terrible odds—the antichrist system—during the Great Tribulation period!

. In chapter 6:9-11, these same saints were under the altar of God; *but now*, we see them before the throne of God, having washed their robes, *and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*.

Let’s go to Apostle John who wrote the book of Revelation, and see what is on his mind, as he introduces this great band of newly born saints, to the raptured church who are now called “elders”.

“And one of the elders asked me (John) this question, “Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

“And I (John) said unto him, “Sir, thou knowest.” (*“Sir, you already know, don’t you.”*).

“And he (the elder) said to me, “Yes, I do. *These are they which came out of Great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” *Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, not any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.*” (Revelation 7: 9-17)

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints” (Revelation 19:8).

This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. (Luke 23: 42-44)

If we asked, “*What is my future to be in Heaven?*” what would we learn? How would we answer this question?

Probably the same way Abraham and other Old Testament figures learned -- through intimate fellowship with the Father: The future of the saints will not be vague and transitory, but defined, limited, and real as soul and body will be real. The glorified will not be pilgrims, transient visitors, or tenants. They will be settled and permanent, established by title through eternity. There will be no tenants in heaven but all will be homeowners. Heaven’s patent is issued to guarantee right and title. I believe God documents in Heaven; and likely our new residence in heaven will be ready for us even before we are resurrected. It is reserved and guarded for us; our names of ownership are engraved and jeweled on our new home.

When Jesus was slain, His blood was spilled on the cross, on His body; it pooled on the ground. He descended into the depths of the earth, delivering the godly from Abraham’s bosom. Do you believe even a single one of the Patriarchs, the cloud of Witnesses turned their backs on Jesus? Do you believe even one person changed his mind and said, “*The wait wasn’t worth it?*”

For an answer to that question, see Acts 7:55-60. Stephen, the first martyr, was a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. In the presence of a cruel, murderous death and an infuriated mob, he had the sight and peace of heaven. In great violence, even while Stephen had his face lifted unto the Master, the mob killed him.

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7: 55-60)

Many today are being martyred for the sake of Jesus Christ over this entire earth, especially among nationalities who make Christians the enemy. Why is this so? There are many answers to that question; but Jesus Himself said this:

“Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” (Matthew 24:8-10)

The Spilt Blood Of Jesus:

Blood is a strange substance. Never has man understood the life giving substance in blood. He knows nothing about life. He cannot create life, though he continues to attempt it in the laboratories. God created man in His likeness. Psalm 139:14 states that man is fearfully and wonderfully made: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11).

The makeup of Jesus’ blood was perfect. Peter rightly describes it as precious blood (1 Peter 1:19). It is God’s price for the redemption of the whole human race. Picture in your mind the scene at Calvary. No artist has ever pictured Calvary as it really was. There was no loin cloth. No courtesy given there!

The crown of thorns was put roughly on His head. Many thorns, up to one-and-a-half inches long jabbed into His scalp, producing such serious wounds that blood spurted out and ran into His hair and beard, matting both in dark red. The spikes were driven into the palms of His hands, and His blood coursed down His arms and was literally sprinkled by His own fingers onto the ground beneath on behalf of the sins of the whole world. Later the spear was thrust into His side and His blood spurted out and ran down the sides of the cross to the ground below. His feet were driven through with spikes and more blood ran down the sides of the altar.

“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14).

Every bone was out of joint (Psalm 22:14). His face was dreadful to look upon. Those who looked on Him saw only blood. He was a spectacle of blood. His body was mangled so badly that He no longer looked human. His hair and beard were soaked in His own blood; His back from 39 stripes was lacerated and covered in His own blood; the cross was covered in His blood. The earth beneath the cross was soaked. It was blood, blood, blood. Every single type of the atonement was fulfilled in Christ that day. Jesus cried out, “It is finished”, and the veil was rent from the top to the bottom.

**Please Understand That
Jesus fulfilled the Atonement
When He Sprinkled His Own Blood
On the Altar (Cross) In (Exodus 24: 6-8)
Round About The Cross In (Exodus 29: 12-16)
On The High Priest's Garments (Exodus 29: 20, 21)
On The High Priest's Ear, Thumb & Toe (Lev.8:23-24; 30)
Sprinkled His Finger Seven Times For Perfection (Lev. 8: 11)
On The Bottom Of The Cross (Leviticus 4:6,7)
On The Side Of The Cross (Leviticus 5: 9)
Around The Cross And On The Earth Beneath (Leviticus 7:2)
...And Seven Times Before The Tabernacle (Numbers 19:4)**

Blessings to you from the Stephens' family

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