

The Akedah, The Binding

So one more time God tested Abraham's faith to see if Abraham would truly walk with Him. This was the tenth time God tested Abraham. This time God told Abraham to take his beloved son Isaac and offer him up. Abraham had waited so long for this promised child and now God requires Abraham to offer him up. It is believed that Isaac looked like his father. Could this have deeper meaning to it? Remember we just read that we are to crucify our flesh, so it could be like looking into a mirror, maybe Abraham saw himself doing just that when he approached Isaac with his knife.

Hebrews 11:17-18 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and the one who had received the promises was offering up his only son; it was he to whom it was said, 'Through Isaac your descendants shall be named.'"

Genesis 22 tells us about this testing. *"Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.' So Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day **Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place** from a distance. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey, and I and the boy will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.' And Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' And he said, 'Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?' Abraham said, 'God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together."*

It is believed that when Abraham raised his eyes that he saw Mount Moriah, the mountain on which one day the temple would be built and above it was the Presence of God hovering over it.

This sounds like **Revelation 21:1-4**, *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I*

saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.'"

Yes, one day the Lord's presence will hover over the earth like a canopy. A chuppah is a canopy that is over the bride and the groom during their wedding.

Let's continue in **Genesis 22:5-18**, So Abraham and his son Isaac traveled to the place that God showed them, telling his servants that he and the boy would return. Abraham carried all the things he would need and Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice. Abraham built the altar and placed Isaac upon it and he took out his knife and when he did God called out to him and said *'Do not hurt the boy for now I know that you are faithful to Me.'* God provided a ram caught in the thicket for the sacrifice and He said to Abraham, *"I'll bless you—oh, how I'll bless you! And I'll make sure that your children flourish—like stars in the sky! like sand on the beaches! And your descendants will defeat their enemies. All nations on Earth will find themselves blessed through your descendants because you obeyed Me."*

Hebrews 11:19 says, *"Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death."*

In Abraham's eyes Isaac did return from the dead. It could have been that when Isaac saw his father draw near with his knife, that the sight of that knife lifted up toward him caused him to pass out. So when he came to, Abraham did welcome him back from the dead. The story of the Binding is read during the Feast of Rosh Hashanah. The blowing of the ram's horn (shofar) is believed to be blown in memory of the Akedah, "The Binding." In the liturgy we ask God to "remember us for life." The binding of Isaac concludes with his life being spared, and he too is "remembered for life." Abraham's devotion results in hope for life.

The thought of Isaac's death caused the death of Sarah. She was 127 years old. She was 90 years old when he was born. So Isaac was around 36 or 37 when this took place. Isaac is a foreshadowing of the Messiah. He too, died and was welcomed

back from the dead. This was also the foreshadowing of the sacrificial service of the Temple. Yeshua was the Lamb of God and Isaac was the lamb of Abraham.

God's part of His covenant was that He was going to bless Abraham with land and descendants so numerous that they would not be able to be counted. Those who blessed Abraham would be blessed and those who didn't would not be blessed. God's covenant was passed on to Isaac and to Jacob and his twelve children right on down to today.

Abraham's part of the covenant was that he first had to leave behind his family and their pagan ways and follow God's leading to an unknown land. We know that Abraham's faith is what was credited to him as righteousness. This righteousness that was seen through Abraham's obedience and faith was all throughout his walk with God. God even changed Abraham and Sarah's names as part of the covenant.

The sign of this covenant was circumcision on the eighth day.

God's covenant with Abraham is strictly for the Jewish people. Today we see Israel in the promised land and even though Israel is not occupying all the land that God was giving to Abraham, one day that too, will be fulfilled.

Jacob

Abraham had Isaac, and Isaac had Esau and Jacob, and Jacob had twelve sons who were known as the twelve tribes of Israel. Here is their story. Before Rebecca gave birth she was troubled until God told her that she was going to have twins, in fact He told her that she had two nations within her. Yes, and they were going to be two divided nations as we will see. Esau and Jacob were nothing alike and to this day there has been division between the two. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and through deception Jacob received the blessings of his father Isaac. In a fiery rage from Esau, Jacob fled. He spent the night in a place called Luz.

This is where we will begin **Genesis 28:10-22**, *"Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he happened upon a particular place and spent the night there because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and made it a support for his head, and lay down in that place. And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. Then behold, the Lord was standing above it*

and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'The Lord is certainly in this place, and I did not know it!' And he was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!' So Jacob got up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had placed as a support for his head, and set it up as a memorial stone, and poured oil on its top. Then he named that place Bethel; but previously the name of the city had been Luz. Jacob also made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father's house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. And this stone, which I have set up as a memorial stone, will be God's house, and of everything that You give me I will assuredly give a tenth to You.'"

Every generation has to experience God for themselves. I'm sure that Isaac told his children the stories that his father told him. Jacob had begun living his stories that he could one day tell his children. Jacob continued on his journey to his mother's family, and there he married his wife Rachel. After twenty years Jacob returned home with his wives and all of his children but before he got there Jacob and his father-in-law had an encounter. You see Jacob left with his children and wives and herds and he never said good-bye. After all these years Jacob still was a little deceitful. After three days, Laban realized they were gone. Three days was a common theme. Three days journey for Abraham and son, three days and Pharoah realized that he just sent his free labor away. Laban caught up to Jacob on the seventh day just like Pharoah caught up to Israel on the seventh day.

Well, to make a long story short, Jacob and Laban make a covenant and they both went their own way. If Jacob thought meeting up with Laban was a sight to behold, he was about to have another encounter, his brother. So Jacob sent his messengers before him to tell his brother that he had come back.

Genesis 32:6-8 tells us his response. *"And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.' Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks, the herds, and the camels, into two companies; for he said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape.'"*

First we have two divided nations and now we have a divided household. We see later in history that the tribes of Israel were also divided. Ten tribes broke away and were called the Northern Kingdom, Israel and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah. One day Yeshua will do some dividing Himself as we read in

Matthew 25:31-33, *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left."*

Genesis 32:24-32 continues. Jacob was alone and a man appeared to him, an angel, and wrestled with him till day break. *"Then the angel said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.' But he said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then he said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have contended with God and with men, and have prevailed.'"* So Jacob called the place Peniel for he said, *"I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared."* Jacob and his brother reconciled and went their own way.

Genesis 33:17 tells us this, *"Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth (a temporary dwelling)."*

We will see once again the importance of Succoth as we go on. From Succoth he went to Shechem. In Shechem a tragedy occurred when the son of Shechem molested Dinah who was the daughter of Leah. Her brothers told Shechem that everyone had to be circumcised before he could marry Dinah and so they agreed.

Genesis 34: 25-29 says, *"Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons—Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers—each took his sword and came upon the city undetected, and killed every male. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and left. Jacob's sons came upon those killed and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their flocks, their herds, and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field; and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even everything that was in the houses."*

I tell this story because of Israel's response to his sons.

Genesis 34: 30, *"Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, 'You have brought trouble on me by making me repulsive among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since my men are few in number, they will band together against me and attack me, and I will be destroyed, I and my household!'"*

Needless to say, the brothers were appalled at their father's response that it was about him and not their sister.

Genesis 35 :1-4 says, *"Then God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.' So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, 'Remove the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments; and let's arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me on the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.' So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem."*

Removing all the idols in one's life does not remove the idols that are in one's heart. We just read how Jacob divided his family into two camps, and now we are going to once again see this playing out right in his own household. Jacob then moved to Bethel and it was there that God changed his name to Israel

Genesis 35: 16-21 continues, *"Then they journeyed on from Bethel; but when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe difficulties in her labor. And when she was suffering severe difficulties in her labor, the midwife said to her, 'Do not fear, for you have another son!' And it came*

about, as her soul was departing, that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set up a memorial stone over her grave; that is the memorial stone of Rachel's grave to this day. Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder."

Jacob seems to be having his share of problems. This is a foreshadowing of the trouble Israel will have in the future. We call it the tribulation, Yeshua called it the birth pangs of the Messiah.

Matthew 24: 4-9, *"And Yeshua answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will mislead many people. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains. Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."*

Jeremiah 30: 5-7 says, *"This is what the Lord says: 'Cries of fear are heard—terror, not peace. Ask and see; Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, every face turned deathly pale? How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.'"*

Revelation 12: 1-6 speaks about a woman in travail, *"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."*

Forty years after Yeshua died, the Temple was destroyed. Rome waged war on the Jewish people and the people did run into exile.

But **John 16:21-22** tells us this, *"Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one is going to take your joy away from you. Rachel did not have joy so she named the boy Ben-Oni which means "son of my trouble." But Israel changed his name to Benjamin which means son of my right hand."*

Jeremiah 31: 15 speaks of Israel in exile: *"This is what the Lord says: 'A voice is heard in Ramah, lamenting and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; She refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.'"*

The Jewish people believe in two Messiah's, Yeshua's first coming reflects the Messiah as the son of Joseph who suffered and died. Yeshua spoke these words in

Matthew 10:34, *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."*

Yes, the day of Judgement is coming and there will be great weeping and sorrow.

Rachel was buried in Bethlehem. It truly was a place of weeping. Today many people visit Rachel's grave and they weep and they pray and they hope for the future. Today Rachel is weeping for her children. Israel camped in a place called Migdal Eder, which means "Watchtower of the Flock." Rachel was a shepherdess tending her father's flock and so too, shepherds in Bethlehem who were tending their flock when they received the announcement from angels that the Messiah, the Good Shepherd was born. It is believed that these shepherds were tending sheep that would be used for sacrificial offerings and of course, Yeshua was the perfect Lamb of God.

Joseph

Jacob who is now called Israel shows his favor for his son Joseph because Jacob loved his mother Rachel more than all the others. It is believed that Joseph strongly resembled his father, much like the Messiah who said in **John 14:9**, *"Don't you know*

Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"

Let's stop here. We see here once again that favoritism separated a family, first his father Isaac who favored Esau and now Jacob was showing favoritism to Joseph. It was so obvious to all because Jacob did not hide his favoritism. Remember the story of Dinah? Jacob's response was not about Dinah, but himself. We see that Jacob also gave this coat of many colors to Joseph as if he was royalty, because that is exactly what it represented. Back In that day, having a coat with many colors symbolized your wealth because it cost so much money to make it. This caused the rest of his sons to hate their brother Joseph because he was without a doubt, the beloved child. Just like Isaac was the beloved son of Abraham, well Joseph was the beloved son of Jacob and of course, Yeshua is the beloved Son of His Father.

Matthew 3:16-17, *"As soon as Yeshua was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is My Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"*

But Joseph was also a dreamer of dreams.

Genesis 37:5-8 tells us one of these dreams. *"Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, 'Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, **my sheaf stood up** and also remained standing; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.' Then his brothers said to him, 'Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?' So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."*

The day that you begin to "count the omer", which is a sheaf, is the same day that Yeshua, who was the first- fruits, rose from the grave. The priest would take a single sheaf of barley and wave it before the Lord in the Temple. It was called a wave offering. This was definitely a foreshadowing of the Messiah.

1 Corinthians 15:20-26 says, *"But the fact is, Messiah has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man death came, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Messiah the first fruits, after that those who are Messiah at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to our God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death."*

Then Joseph had another dream as **Genesis 37:9-11** says, *"Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. 'Listen,' he said, 'I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.' When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, 'What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?' His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind."*

Yes, Jacob believed the dream. We find another person who pondered all things in her heart, Mary.

Luke 2:17-19 tells us, *"When they had seen Yeshua, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."*

Yes, Mary's Son was the fulfilment of Joseph's dream. But at the time Joseph's second dream caused a real stir, but this time it was even with his father. The question is how could Joseph's mother, who was represented as the moon, bow down to him when she had already passed on? This dream had to have a deeper meaning to it and it did. This dream was speaking of the Messiah. Yes, Joseph indeed rose to power and his brothers did bow down to him.

We read about the prophet Balam who prophesied this in **Numbers 24:15-19**, *"Then he took up his discourse and said, 'The declaration of Balaam the son of Beor, and the declaration of the man whose eye is opened, the declaration of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered: I see him, but not now; I look at*

him, but not near; a star shall appear from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall smash the forehead of Moab, and overcome all the sons of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, while Israel performs valiantly. One from Jacob shall rule, and will eliminate the survivors from the city."

Yes, the star on the rising was Messiah, even a single star led the Magi to the Messiah. The Jewish people believe that this is referring to the Messianic Age when the dead shall rise. **Revelation 12: 1** speaks about a woman in travail, *"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."*

This is truly speaking about Israel and the mother is Rachel who gave birth and was blessed with her son Joseph, who represents the suffering Messiah who brought us salvation through His shed blood. Well, Joseph's brothers kept it all in their mind also. One day when they were out in the field they saw Joseph in the distance coming toward them. This is definitely like the story of the binding, Abraham saw in the distance.

Hebrews 11:12-13 says this, *"Therefore even from one man, and one who was as good as dead at that, there were born descendants who were just as the stars of heaven in number, and as the innumerable grains of sand along the seashore. All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but **having seen and welcomed them from a distance**, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."*

The brothers devised a **plan** to take Joseph and do away with him. But Reuben said, do not harm the boy, so they held him in an empty **pit** till a caravan came by and they **sold** Joseph to a group who were headed to Egypt. Once again we find a similar narrative of Joseph and the Messiah. It is believed that Joseph also was in the pit for three days. The brothers' plan sounds like another plan as we read in

Matthew 26:3-4, *"At that time the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the courtyard of the high priest named Caiaphas; and they plotted together to arrest Yeshua covertly and kill Him."*

Matthew 26:14-15 continues, *"Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?' And they set out for him thirty pieces of silver."*

So the brothers sold Joseph. But even though Joseph was not among them they really never did rid themselves of him. The brother's went home and told their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal as they presented him with Joseph's robe dipped in blood. In **Revelation 19:13** we also see Yeshua's garment. *"He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God."*

From that day forward Israel never got over Joseph's presumed death.

Genesis 37:34-35 says Jacob makes a profound statement. *"Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. 'No,' he said, 'I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.' So his father wept for him."*

Prophetically Jacob was saying that he would mourn till he rejoined Joseph which he did in Egypt.

Genesis 37: 36 says, *"Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard."*

Through many events Joseph finds himself in prison and years later Joseph found favor with Pharaoh, in fact, he became a mighty ruler second to Pharaoh. But famine was coming and God spoke to Joseph to show him what he and his country needed to do to prepare. After 7 years, famine came and it also spread to the land of his father's house. So Israel told his sons that they need to go to get them food.

So they left and when they arrived Joseph recognized his brothers, but after all those years they did not recognize Joseph. So Joseph accused them of being spies.

Through a series of events the brothers came a second time and then Joseph revealed himself, and he had the brothers bring their father to Egypt to live. Jacob was reunited with his son Joseph and the dream came true, they all bowed down to him.

This is what **Philippians 2:9-11** tells us that one day every knee shall bow. *"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Messiah Yeshua is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Joseph has two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. **Genesis 48:1-5** tells us this, *"Then Jacob said to Joseph, 'God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a multitude of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.'"*

When Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons he made them equal to the other eleven sons, thus giving them an inheritance. It was like giving Joseph a double portion. But his sons were no longer his sons but his brothers. To this day when fathers bless their sons they say, "May you be like Ephraim and Manasseh." The fact the two boys were born in Egypt by an Egyptian mother while Joseph was estranged from his family they are considered like anyone else who is not born to Jewishness.

They could be referred to as Gentiles and yet, Jacob adopted them.

Christian Gentiles have not replaced Israel, but they have been adopted or as we read, grafted into Israel.

Genesis 49:1 says, *"Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, 'Assemble yourselves, so that I may tell you what will happen to you in the days to come.'"*

Jacob blessed his son and they blessed him by taking him back to the promised land to be buried. Joseph forgave his brothers and he ordered them that when the day came that they would take his bones also back to the promised land.

We have seen that God was faithful to all the Patriarchs and even to the Matriarchs who found themselves without a child, but in God's faithfulness did produce what became the stars in the sky too numerous to count. We now see that the children of Israel are no longer in the promised land, but that day will come.