

# The Shadow of the Cross

## Study Pages

### THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

I am, first of all, reminded of the donkey from last week's segment, the one upon which Jesus made his Triumphal Entry

- Not all breeds of donkeys carry a visible "shadow of the cross"
- Yet, it is a very common and ancient trait across a variety of breeds
- So ancient, in fact, that there is a very high probability that the donkey that bore Jesus into Jerusalem that day had imprinted upon its DNA
- The shadow of a cross, which would be a long dorsal stripe running along the spine from the mane to the tail with a perpendicular (crossbar) shoulder stripe across the withers
- And it makes me think how appropriate it was for the donkey, the one who literally bears upon its back the shadow of a cross, to be the one to carry the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

### ABRAHAM & ISAAC

- **Genesis 22:1-14** [Gen 22:1-14 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham... 2 "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there... 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering... 6 So Abraham took the wood... and laid *it* on Isaac... 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said... where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb... 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood... 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and 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 only *son*, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him was* a ram caught in a thicket... So Abraham... took the ram, and offered it up... instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said *to* this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."
  - First of all: This was a test... this was only a test
    - Abraham believed two things:
      - Either God would provide substitute OR
      - If it went that far, God would raise Isaac from the dead
        - **Hebrews 11:17-19** [NKJV] By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead...

- And it should not be lost on any of us that even though we should know from Scripture that Abraham had a son named Ishmael. Yet, God referred to Isaac as Abraham's only son
  - Thus pointing us directly to **John 3:16** [NKJV] For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- "Saddled his donkey"
  - We may not know who rode the donkey to Mt Moriah, but it was clearly part of the equation
  - And it makes me wonder if that donkey would have carried the same ancient markings we discussed earlier about the cross
  - When I was researching this thing about the cross on the back of donkeys, one source said that even in breeds that do NOT obviously display the markings in their coat, but when their hair is shaved, there is very often still a clear demarcation of a cross on the skin, just below the surface of their coat
  - The demarcation of a cross upon its back has been deeply embedded across thousands of years and I find it interesting that God would include a donkey in this narrative about Abraham and Isaac
- "And the two young men that came along on the journey"
  - Reminds me of the two men who came along with Jesus
    - **John 19:18** [NKJV] ...they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.
- And the whole idea of Isaac carrying the split wood...
  - Crosses are made from split wood
  - Two things come to mind:
    - **Luke 23:26** [NKJV] Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian... on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus.
    - **Matthew 16:24** [NKJV] Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.
- "God Himself will provide the Lamb" - And there you have it:
  - God would provide a substitute
  - And eventually His only Son would be that substitute
- "Since you have not withheld your only son from Me"
  - The implication of God's intent here is:
    - "Thus, I will not withhold from you My only Son"
- "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided"
  - To this day, Mount Moriah is the same mount upon which we find Jerusalem with Calvary being just outside the gates on the Temple Mount

#### THE SUFFERING SERVANT

- It is a concept support by Isaiah 53 and the various New Testament references to the same
  - **1 Peter 2:24** [NKJV] who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

- **Acts 8:32-35** [NKJV] The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.
- **Isaiah 53:3-7** [NKJV] He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.
- In the spring of 2024, we went with some friends on a prayer journey to Israel
  - While we were there, one of our Bible-scholar friends took us to a particular place at the edge of the Temple Mount
  - On the surface it looked like a parking lot and a busy place of ingress & egress. Yet, he explained that this was most likely the place commonly known by the Latin phrase: the Via Dolorosa
    - Translated as: The Way of Suffering
    - This would be the path near the Old City in Jerusalem that Jesus is believed to have walked while the cross was being carried to Golgotha
  - This "Way of Suffering" is a powerful symbol of Christ's voluntary path to the cross
    - A path of humility, obedience and love in the midst of agony
    - It is literally the "road" where the wood for the Sacrifice was carried
  - He was
    - Wounded for our transgressions
    - Bruise or crushed for our iniquities
    - The chastisement for our peace was upon Him
    - And by His stripes we are healed and made whole
    - He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth
    - Like a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth
  - What a detailed picture of the innocent suffering, substitutionary death for all who would believe

#### THE PASSOVER LAMB - Exodus chapter 12

- God was about to deliver the children of Israel from over 400 years of slavery
  - And the hammer of judgment was about to strike the land of Egypt through the 10th and final plague

- The death angel would strike dead all the firstborn in the land
- Yet, because God had a plan
  - It was necessary to find a way to protect His chosen people
  - And thus, He gave them very detailed instructions on what they were to do
  - It was called THE PASSOVER
    - If they would do what He said to do, His hand of protection would be upon them
    - He would PASSOVER them and protect them from the destroying angel
    - It involved
      - The slaughter of a spotless lamb
      - The application of its blood upon their entry ways
      - And a meal that included a tremendous amount of symbolism
      - Not just in what they consumed, but how and when they were to do all these things
    - And in the end, the LORD set it up as a memorial that they were to observe every year in commemoration
    - And all of which would be fulfilled by Christ 2,000 years later on the cross during that same memorial celebration
- Here are some things to consider:
  - The spotless lamb was to be slain just before twilight
    - Most theologians put the time of Jesus death on the cross
    - As being at the exact same time the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in preparation for the evening meal
  - The blood being applied to the door posts and lintels of every home which was to avert the death angel
    - In this, we should all understand that Christ's blood is what made the way for our redemption and our protection from destruction
    - It is not unusual for preachers these days to refer to applying the Blood of Christ to the doorposts of our lives
      - **1 Peter 1:19** [NKJV] ...with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
      - **Romans 5:9** [NKJV] ...having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
  - They were instructed to roast the lamb
    - **Numbers 9:12** [NKJV] They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.
    - **John 19:36** [NKJV] For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not *one* of His bones shall be broken."
      - It was the perfect preservation of the Sacrifice
  - They were instructed to eat the meal with Bitter Herbs and unleavened bread
    - The bitter herbs pointing toward the suffering & affliction of Gethsemane, the scourging, the way of suffering, and the cross
    - And the unleavened bread pointing toward the purging of sin from the lives of those who would believe

- **1 Corinthians 5:7** [NKJV] Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

#### THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM"

- Involved lots of sacrifices over many centuries –
- All, in an effort to cover the sin of the people
  - **Hebrews 10:1-4** [NKJV] For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come... can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? ...But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.
- The sacrifice of bulls and goats and lambs could only go so far
  - They could only cover the sins of the people
- It took the official substitute - the only begotten of the Father to redeem mankind and ultimately remit our sins
  - **Psalms 103:12** [NKJV] As far as the east is from the west, *so* far has He removed our transgressions from us.
- The blood of bulls and goats *covered* the sin of the people
  - Jesus' Precious Blood REMOVED sin's eternal stain
- The sacrificial system required repeated offerings;
  - Whereas Jesus blood only had to be shed once
  - **Romans 6:10** [NKJV] For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all...
  - **Hebrews 9:22** [NKJV] ...according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.
- The Sacrificial System of the Old Testament was a shadow of good things to come
  - Yet, it only provided temporary relief
  - With Christ's perfect and final sacrifice, once His blood was shed, there was no more need for the Sacrificial System

#### THE VEIL WAS TORN

**Matthew 27:45-46, 50-51** [NKJV] Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice... "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"... And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom...

- The veil that was torn would have been the veil in the Temple that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the world; that segregated the manifested presence of God into a tiny little space
- What did this mean?
  - God was indicating that He was done with the Sacrificial System of the Old Covenant
    - The final sacrifice had been made and there would be no more need for the mercy seat in the earthly Temple
  - God was moved out of the Temple made with human hands - Why?

- Because a way was being made for the Spirit of God to now dwell in the hearts of men t
- **1 Corinthians 3:16** [NKJV] Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?
- A way was being made for the Promise of the Father to be given for the Holy Spirit to make the transition from being "with" us to being "in" us
- **John 14:17** [NKJV] the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.
- **Colossians 1:27** [NKJV] To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- Right here in the midst of the Shadows of the Old Testament being fulfilled, the VEIL WAS TORN and exposed yet another FORESHADOW of that which was to come, not many days, hence.

### THE BRAZEN SERPENT

**Numbers 21:4-9** [NKJV] Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea... and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

- For obvious reasons, serpents are a type for sin
  - Think about the Garden of Eden and the conversation that Eve had with the serpent
  - In the Scriptures, serpents almost always represent sin
- The children of Israel sinned with grumbling and complaining And they knew it once the plague of serpents broke out in their midst
  - God's answer for their situation was for Moses to fashion a type of sin - a serpent and put it on a pole
  - And for the pole to be lifted up between heaven and earth for the people to see
- We can't get a more obvious Shadow of the Cross than this
  - Jesus was lifted up on the cross to pay the price for the sins of all mankind
  - It is a beautiful picture that many preachers refer to as "Life for a look"
- **John 3:14-15** [NKJV] "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
  - Not only did the brazen serpent provide a solution for their sin, it also provided healing for their bodies and deliverance from certain death

- Even today, in our modern society
  - Think of the symbol most commonly used by the medical profession
  - It's a snake on a pole
  - The brazen serpent is not just about forgiveness or redemption;
  - It's also about the healing of our bodies
  - Jesus made a way where there seemed to be no way
- **John 12:32** [NASB95] 32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."
- **James 4:8** [NKJV] Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

## THE TREE

- Last week we compared the Garden of Eden with the Garden of Gethsemane and took a closer look at the shadow which was cast from the beginning
- There was a tree in the Garden of Eden that Adam & Eve were forbidden from which to eat, but they ate of it anyway
- It was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
- It was *that* tree that cost Adam & Eve their right-standing with God and unrighteousness became a generational plague that affected their entire lineage
- The cross of Calvary was, at its root, from a tree
  - And just as a decision regarding a certain tree cost Adam everything
  - So, decisions regarding the cross can restore everything that Adam lost
- The tree upon which Jesus was offered can be viewed as a direct correlation to the instrument the devil used to bring a curse upon all humanity
- The tree, the cross, was the altar upon which Jesus was offered,
  - Restoring all that Adam gave up
  - Reversing the curse and
  - Bringing the ultimate restoration of life eternal