

12-9-23 To Roeh Israel Abilene – *Akaidah Yitzhak*, part 6
Torah Portion; Staying in Gen 22:1 -19 VaYeshev Gen 37:1 - 40
Haftarah: Amos 2:6 – 3:8
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: John 14:1-5

The Akaidat Yitzhak part 6

Central question of this message: Are you ready to join G-d in a special place?

Today's Torah portion is VaYeshev, which means "and [Yacov] settled (or dwelled)." Its name comes from the first Hebrew word in the passage (and the first three words in the English translation, below).

Gen 37:1-4

37 Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. 2 These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic.

also qualify as such sons of old age. Indeed, all of his children were born to him as an older man. Recall he was 84 years of age when he married. So, maybe there is more to this statement than merely a statement of age.

Moses ben Nachman (also known as Nachmanides, or Ramban) (1194–1270), was a commentator who lived in the northeast Spanish autonomous territory called Catalonia, has an interesting take on this statement:

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that it was the custom of the elders to take one of their younger sons to be with them to attend them. He would constantly lean on his arm, never being separated from him, and he would be called *ben z'kunav* [son of old age] because he attended him in his old age. Now Jacob took Joseph for this purpose, and he was with him constantly. He therefore did not accompany the flock when they went to pasture in distant places.

I think this is a good analysis, and it leads me to the next point I wish to address, the “multicolored tunic.”

The consensus of the Sages seems to be that an analysis of the Hebrew indicates the cloak was one with long sleeves, and went toward the feet as well. And it might have been embroidered with distinctive wide stripes, likely of blue. They indicate that these distinctives in the garment signal an exalted status by the one wearing it.

The Italian Rabbi Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno (1475 – 1549) seems to follow this line of reasoning as he commented:

ועשה לו כתונת פסים, as a visible sign that Joseph was intended by him to become the leader of all the brothers both at home and in the field. The use of such distinctive clothing to symbolise someone's elevated stature is found also in Isaiah 22,21 וְהִלְבַּשְׁתִּיו כְּתֹנֶתָךְ, “I will dress him (Chilkiyah) in your tunic,” where it signals that authority is transferred to the one wearing the appropriate garments. (uniform). The Talmud Baba Kama 11 also confirms that authority is signalled by the attire worn by people possessing it.

The custom of our people is to wear a tallis during worship and prayer, and before the destruction of the Second Temple, the *techelles* (blue thread on the tzitzit, was also used to make stripes on the tallis itself. Today the stripes on the tallitot of the orthodox are black (because we do

not have certainty regarding the precise formula for making the blue dye yet).

So, when we men are wearing the tallis, it seems that we may be following in the footsteps of Yoseph, wearing a garment which signifies a special status of servant of G-d.

And it occurs to me, as my final point in this brief diversion from our main lesson, that it was this very tunic that his brothers ripped, and dipped in blood to take back to Yitzhak to demonstrate that Yoseph was now slain.



The remainder of Yoseph's life also gives us a prophetic view of the coming Messiah. And it is for that reason that our people have referred to the first coming of the Messiah as "Moshiach ben Yoseph," (Messiah son of Joseph) to signify that His first coming would be as a suffering servant, who would be rejected by his brothers, and would die as an atonement for Israel. But in the end He would come from death to live, and be the savior of the world.

And now, let's resume our series on the Akaidah Yitzhak.

When we left the story last time, we saw Yitzhak lying on the altar as the knife was moving toward his throat. The "Angel of the L-rd" stopped Abraham from continuing, and directed his attention to the ram caught in the thicket. Where was that ram? We can discern the location by closer examination of Scripture, and of history following, since this event is highly prophetic of Messiah.

I believe there had to be an angel invisibly holding that ram in that special place so that it could be subdued by a very old man, and then sacrificed in that very spot.

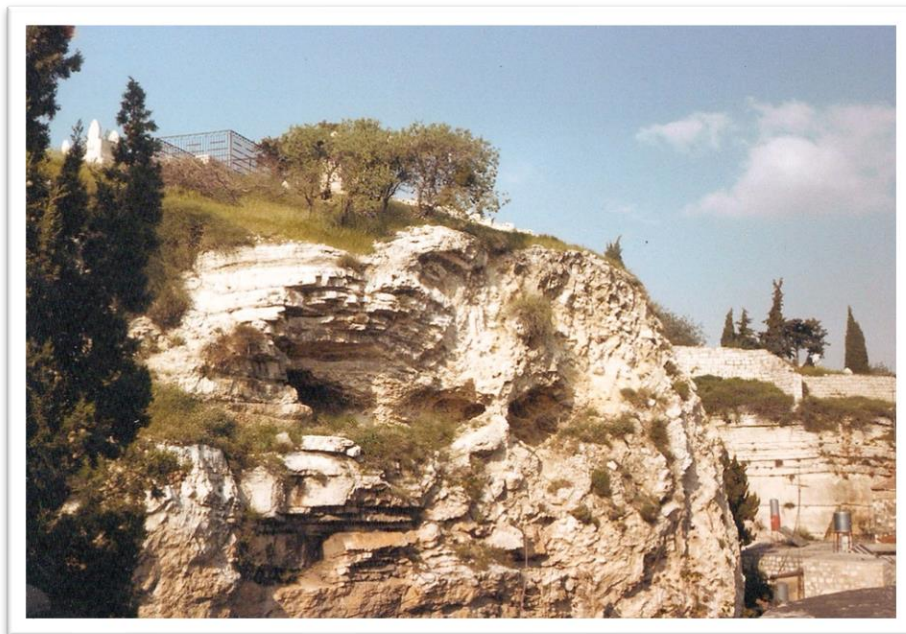
If the location of the ram were not important, it would have simply run up to Abraham right at the side of the altar, and laid down for slaughter.

Let's examine these two locations and review what we know. We know that the sacrifice was to take place in the region called "Land of Moriah". We know that Mount Moriah, a certain location in that region, later became the Temple Mount.

We know that the place where Abraham built the altar to sacrifice his son was within visual distance from where the ram was found secured by its horn.

The Temple mount is not the highest of the hills in that area, but from its top there is a panoramic view of the surrounding hills. On one of those surrounding hills is a place you can see the top of the Temple Mount. And from the top of the Temple Mount, you can see that other special high place as well.

It is a place very near an established road which leads up to Jerusalem, but it is outside the wall. It is “outside the camp” in that respect. See Lev 16:18-26 for the story of the “scapegoat” being taken outside the camp.



It was a place where people convicted of capital crimes would hang, dying by inches, just outside the walls of the city,

in full view by those who came and went. It went by the name Gulgolet, or “the Place of the Skull”.

That name might have been refined during the Roman occupation to become Gol Goatha, meaning the “Place of Execution”, or the Place of the Skull.”

I suspect strongly that the place where Abraham was in the act of sacrificing Yitzhak was the location that would later be occupied by Solomon’s Temple, and more specifically, the location of the altar of sacrifice.

Likewise, I suspect that the place where the ram was found by Abraham was the same place that would later be called Gol Goatha, the “Place of Execution”, or the Place of the Skull.”

These two locations are precisely a half-mile from one another, only 2,635 feet. That is 803 meters and only 0.8 kilometers.

I think these two places were established for this very reason, from the foundations of the world. And Abraham and Yitzhak were walking-out a prophecy that would be fulfilled in great detail, generations later.

I believe that the averted sacrifice of his son by Abraham on the future site of the holy altar of G-d in His Temple was replaced by the sacrifice of a ram on the site where G-d would one day actually sacrifice His Son.

For Abraham, the ram's sacrifice at the "place of execution" took the place of the son on the altar. And the promises made for Abraham's descendants could be fulfilled. For G-d, the Son's sacrifice at the "place of execution" took the place of the ram on the altar. Thus the promises made for Abraham's spiritual descendants could be fulfilled.

The sacrifice of this ram has great significance for our people for another reason, as well.

Our people believe that the *Malak Adonai*, once He had stopped the sacrificial act, accompanied Abraham to the place where the ram was caught by its horn. At that location, the ram was sacrificed, but the *Malak* directed the removal of each of the ram's horns before the fire was kindled.

Our people believe that the *Malak* took the larger of the two horns with him to heaven, and left the smaller of the horns with Abraham, from which Abraham could fashion the first shofar.

When Moses would later receive the Torah at Mt. Horeb (Sinai), it will be accompanied by the sound (actually, “voice”) of the shofar (Exodus 19:16). So, now we have an answer to the question of where G-d got a shofar.

And so we see that the shofar of man, and the shofar of G-d, are both deeply woven into the Akaidah Yitzhak.

There are a number of parallels between what happened to Yoseph in the parasha for today, and Yeshua as the sacrificed Lamb of G-d.

As I relate each of them to Yoseph, you will immediately think of the parallel with Yeshua’s life and coming reign.

Yoseph was destined to greatness, but his brothers rejected him and believed they had effectively “killed” him.

His brothers put Yoseph into the custody of pagans, who abused him terribly.

Yoseph was afflicted, wrongfully accused, even betrayed. And he spent a long time in the darkness of prison.

Yoseph was brought out of darkness, and took his place at the right hand of Pharaoh, who could speak with the very authority of Pharaoh.

Yoseph became the savior of the world. He became the source of the “bread of life.”

Yoseph was, in the eyes of his father, resurrected and was all-powerful.

Yoseph’s original royal cloak, which had been dipped in blood, was replaced with a far greater garment, signifying even greater power and status.

It was important to G-d’s plan for His people that Yoseph go to a place he had never been before, to do a very hard thing he had not even imagined.

It was true for Abraham and Yitzhak as well. And it very well might be important for you to do the same one day.

G-d is a G-d of special places. The time and the places where G-d touched our lives in special ways are etched into our minds, and we have no problem relating them to others in detail.

I suspect I could ask each of you about the time when you accepted Yeshua's atoning sacrifice. You could tell me of the year, maybe even the time of day. But I strongly suspect you could relate significant details about the event, and maybe even point to a place on the ground where it all happened, as well.

We are blessed when we have closer encounters with G-d, and we are blessed to have many "special places" in our memories.

I wish to encourage you regarding one final "special place" which we will each have at the end of our time here. That place is even now "under construction".

John 14:1-5

14 "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 "And you know the way where I am going."

But know that when the time comes for you to occupy that place, it will be ready to receive you. The same was true for Abraham, and also for Yoseph.

G-d went before Abraham to the place that Yeshua, the Son, would be slain, but Abraham's son Yitzhak would not.

G-d went before Yoseph to Egypt, and prepared a way for the promises for his life to be fulfilled, and he would become the savior of the world in his day.

And Yeshua had already been to the place of execution, and knew full well what that would mean for Him, and for us.

We are not at the final "appointed place" for our lives yet. But until then, we are encouraged to continue a holy walk.

But there is also a warning.

Matt 24:45-51

45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food

at the proper time? 46 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47 "Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth.

Go to that special place where you meet G-d. It can be in your prayer closet. It can be a place on the ground. Or you can make a new “special place” right here, right now. Commune deeply with Him, in that place.