

## ABRAHAM BELIEVED THAT GOD COULD RAISE THE DEAD

God knew how much Abraham loved his son. After Abraham had waited almost 40 years, the child's miraculous birth brought laughter to both his father and mother. Isaac was the son of the promise. The great nation God promised would come through Isaac. It was his descendants who would inherit the land. The Messiah or Christ, the savior of the world, would come through Isaac. Isaac was a wonderful gift from God. Abraham and Sarah looked forward to Isaac becoming a man and have grandchildren. All their hopes, even their hope in God, rested in Isaac's future.

When Abraham first believed in God, all his relatives and fellow citizens worshipped idols. Most people from other nations were not serving the true God either. They were superstitious, often doing ridiculous and irrational things to try to please their false gods. One such practice was the offering of their own children as a sacrifice to their idols. Even though animal sacrifice was something the God of heaven allowed to atone for sin, the practice of human sacrifice to appease an angry "god" was a manmade tradition.

However, the practice of human sacrifice, though done out of ignorance and superstition, certainly showed the worshipper to be very zealous and devoted to his god. Possibly, the worshipper offered his own children when times were extreme. Times of war, famine, and disease might cause a person to think that such a sacrifice would certainly get his god's attention.

The God of Abraham later made it known to his people that human sacrifice was an abomination (an atrocity or disgrace) to Him. In about 600 B.C. the nation of Israel began to burn their children as a sacrifice to a false god called Molech. God said to them through the prophet Jeremiah, they *"burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind."* (Jeremiah 7:31 NASB)

The prophet Micah in 700 B.C. asked and answered the following question,

*"Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my first-born for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"* (Micah 6:8 NASB)

So we see very plainly that God neither required nor wanted human sacrifice. In fact it was detestable in his eyes. Yet, in our next lesson we will see that GOD COMMANDED ABRAHAM TO OFFER HIS ONLY SON ISAAC AS A SACRIFICE. What can we learn from this? Keep this lesson to refer to when you receive the next lesson.

**Please answer whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE.**

1. While Abraham was alive, most people believed in the true God.
2. The true God who made the world encouraged men to offer animal sacrifice when they sinned but was not pleased when human sacrifice was offered.
3. What is really important to God is that his people "do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God."