

The Adopted Life

The Second Sunday After Pentecost ~ 06.26.2011

Being Isaac

In God's journey to unite himself with humanity, he started with Abraham and his kids. In the people of Israel, God drew near to humanity, and humanity drew near to God. And because humanity hated God, it meant hell breaking loose. When Israel showered God with hate, they did it as faithful representatives of the human race. And throughout history, as Israel has been showered with hate by the rest of the human race, they endured it as faithful representatives of God.

This movement between God and Israel reached its climax in Jesus. In him, the bringing-together of God and man was made complete. We know the resulting explosion of hate killed Jesus, but we don't always notice that it killed Israel too. Jesus himself and the early church were preoccupied with Israel's doom, which came to pass within 40 years, just as predicted. The crucifixion of Jesus in ~34AD is the earthquake. The destruction of Israel in 70AD is the aftershock. But just as the crucifixion spreads out in waves from Jesus to Israel to the whole world, so does the resurrection to new life (Romans 11). This is dark stuff, but it's ultimately good news.

All of this is my context for reading Genesis 22, where Yahweh tells Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. In addition to the way it pictures God sacrificing his own son, I think it's also God's way of being honest with Abraham about what will happen to his children as a result of being God's chosen people. It is this tree into which we have been grafted. We share in the agonies of Jesus and Israel—bearing in our flesh the pain of the world's reconciliation.

~ John Stonecypher