

Addis Ababa Bible Training Institute

Report

"Sacrifice"



Ken Bolden recently completed a 2-week course about sacrifice. He can speak about sacrifice with a deep background in African culture having ministered to the Luo tribe in Kenya for 20+ years. The colored sketches above were commissioned by Ken and portrayed by a Luo artist. Most of our western minds do not conceive of Abraham as depicted above but that "dissonance" serves to "give us pause" and carefully reconsider the subject. Ken relates his surprise at all the artist's thoughtful insights behind many "teaching elements" in the drawings. I'll provide just two examples. Abraham is standing with no sandals on his feet because he's standing on holy ground. The ram's horns in the thicket have grown around the branches because God had planned for this event before time even began. You look for more.

The subject of "sacrifice" in Biblical study and more formal Theological studies is a very challenging one. We cannot do the subject any justice at all in this short space. But it is one that has been covered with our students in various ways over the past 18 months. "Sacrifice", the word, without context, has myriad meanings and senses. And, as a theological topic, it also has myriad uses, senses, and meanings. We have covered a number of those with this class of men.

Every sacrifice, whatever its context, meaning, purpose, or form is done with some intent and due to some motive. And the intent and motive of the one offering the sacrifice says something very important about the one offering or requiring the sacrifice. It is also important for us to consider the nuanced differences between intent and motive. **Intent** answers the question: "What was the person aiming to do?" **Motive** answers the question: "Why did the person want to do it?"

When it comes to the absolute, all-time, most important sacrifice in the history of the Cosmos, we need to understand that what we imply in our explanation for the why of the crucifixion of Christ, ascribes some intent and motive on the part of God Himself.

In my teaching on the issue of understanding God's intention and motivation for the crucifixion of Christ, I have tried to help these men carefully consider what it says about God's heart and character. We do not want to ascribe intentions or motives that besmirch both His good heart and loving character. Properly understanding God's own intent and motive regarding the Crucifixion of Christ is extremely important. This also means we must have a very solid and wholesome understanding of the wrath of God in the course of God's revealed purposes and actions.

It has been a true joy to direct the thinking of these men toward a truly wholesome and encouraging understanding of the work of God throughout the Biblical record as well as history itself. Do pray for these men and the influence they will have on the progress of God's Kingdom and His church in Ethiopia. We very much look forward to each of them finding their place in ministry in Ethiopia. Also pray for the great needs in adjusting our efforts to address the growing needs of an increasingly urbanized Ethiopia without neglecting the rural Ethiopia that has been such a blessing to those of us that have ministered there in the past decades.

Blessings,

Jim Wilson and the Students of the AABTI